

Fears on the rise in Lebanon of massive Israeli attack

BEIRUT (R) — Fears are growing in Beirut that Israel may launch a wide-scale operation in South Lebanon after its repeated bombardment of civilian areas and widening of a fishing blockade against the region's seaports.

A government minister said late on Thursday that Lebanon had begun a flurry of diplomatic contact to stop the situation worsening on one of the last active Arab-Israeli frontlines.

"There is grave concern in Lebanon of widening of this (sea) blockade and of wide military operations," the minister, who declined to be named, told reporters.

Lebanese Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Zafer Al Hassan was to hold talks on Friday with ambassadors of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to probe their willingness to back a formal complaint by Beirut on the Israeli aggression.

Eight Lebanese civilians were wounded by shelling on Thursday from Israeli forces occupying a South Lebanon border zone, in response to guerrilla attacks that wounded one Israeli soldier and an allied militiaman.

Israeli gunboats simultaneously extended a two-week naval blockade against fishermen in the port of Tyre to Sidon, South Lebanon's biggest port, saying if they sail at night or venture more than one kilometre from the shore they risk being fired on.

The Lebanese concern stems from the Israeli aggressions and the expansion of the blockade. Yesterday it was imposed on tyre today Sidon, tomorrow no one knows," the minister said.

Labour Minister Abdullah Al Amin, a close friend of Syria, said on Thursday Lebanon could shell Israeli towns and villages if Israel continued to bombard South Lebanon town and villages.

"If the aggression expands we have the ability to disturb the Israelis wherever they are. If the aggression expands to reach (Lebanese) towns and villages we are able to reply in the same way by shelling towns and villages in

Israel," Mr. Amin said.

Mr. Amin expressed anger at the United States, saying it was responsible for the frequent Israeli shelling in South Lebanon.

"The United States has threatened Lebanon it will revert to the veto if Lebanon complains to the United Nations," he added.

But the Foreign Ministry in Beirut instructed its ambassador in Washington Rick Tabbara to hold "speedy contacts" with the American administration over the situation in South Lebanon.

Mr. Tabbara was expected to meet soon with Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs, "to demand the United States interfere to pressure Israel to end the attacks and the blockade," the minister said.

Beirut also told its U.N. Ambassador Samir Mubarak to consult with United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on the feasibility of Beirut lodging a formal complaint.

In light of these contacts, there will be an assessment whether to... file a complaint or not," the minister said.

Lebanese politicians have said Israel enforced the blockade to force the Lebanese army to ease security checks on residents travelling to and from Israel's occupation zone in the south.

Lebanon — arguing pro-Israeli agents from the zone were behind a December bombing that killed three people in Beirut — has refused to ease the checks which it said were legitimate.

Israel, though vowing to pursue guerrillas beyond the border zone, said this week it would avoid a repetition of massive campaigns like its ferocious 1993 air-and-artillery onslaught which killed 150 civilians and sent tens of thousands of Lebanese villagers fleeing.

The week-long campaign, launched in retaliation for rocket attacks on Israel, was stopped by a U.S.-brokered agreement in which the Jewish state and the guerrillas pledged to refrain from attacking civilian centres.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday meets a committee in charge of organising a conference in Italy on Jordan's history (Petra photo)

Turin to host international conference on Jordan's history

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday emphasised the importance of a planned international conference on the history and archaeology of Jordan and said it would help further highlight the country's antiquities and historical importance.

Speaking at a meeting at the Royal Court with the committee which is preparing for the conference to be held in the Italian city of Turin in June, Prince Hassan expressed hope that the conference

would further focus light on Jordan's ancient and modern history.

The committee, led by professor Georgio Gullini, head of the centre in Turin University which is organising the conference briefed the Crown Prince on the preparations for the meeting, which will be held under the title: "The Use of Land and Settlement Throughout the Various Ages."

The six-day conference is expected to review 105 research papers presented by delegates from Europe, the

United States and Jordan.

The committee groups heads of archaeology departments at the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University and Mutu University, in addition to the heads of archaeological research centres operating in Jordan.

Saturday's meeting was attended by Her Highness Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan and Dr. Ghazi Bisheh, director general of the Department of Antiquities, and Italian Ambassador to Jordan Romualdo Bettarini.

Greece: Cyprus key to EU-Turkey union

ATHENS (R) — Greece said on Friday its objections to a European Union (EU) customs agreement with Turkey would be lifted only if a specific timetable was set for the accession of Cyprus to the EU.

Government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos said Athens wants an existing EU document to say talks with Turkey during an EU foreign ministers' meeting on Feb. 6 but later rejected it, setting four new conditions.

If the phrasing is put this way — something that is accepted by the EU's French presidency — then the Greek government will agree (to the customs union). Our position is clear," Mr. Venizelos told reporters.

The Greek position was insisted on all four conditions but stressed that the Cyprus issue was the most important.

the 15-member EU, and Mr. Venizelos said he was confident other member states would accept the Greek demand.

"I don't see any reason not to accept it," he said.

Greece adopted in principle the customs union deal with Turkey during an EU foreign ministers' meeting on Feb. 6 but later rejected it, setting four new conditions.

They included more specific dates and procedures on EU membership for Cyprus, a reduction in money offered to Ankara, and more aid to Greece's textile industry, expected to suffer from closer ties between the EU and Turkey.

Mr. Venizelos said Athens insisted on all four conditions but stressed that the Cyprus issue was the most important.

Closer EU-Turkey relations have been blocked for years by the row between Athens and Ankara over Cyprus.

France has been seeking ways to meet Greece's new demands before a planned "association council" with Turkey on March 6, on the sidelines of a regular meeting of EU foreign ministers.

It offered Greece a counter-proposal to its four demands on Wednesday when Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs George Mangakis travelled to Paris for talks with the French government.

On Thursday Athens sent its answer to the French but did not make it public.

If an agreement is reached,

France would take the deal to the other EU members for approval, Mr. Mangakis said.

The customs union, which foresees sharp two-way reductions in trade barriers by 1996, would give Turkey some of the closest links to the EU of a non-member country and unlock as much as \$1 billion in aid.

Greece's objections are not the only ones the French must overcome before the customs deal is in the final stretch.

The European Parliament cast further doubt on the deal last week when it said Turkey's human rights record was not good enough for the agreement to be allowed to go through at present.

The unprecedented legal action, to be heard next month, has been brought by Suleiman Al Adsani, a former Kuwaiti pilot, who is in hiding in Britain after receiving death threats, said the paper.

British courts have historically ruled that foreign governments are immune from prosecution in Britain, but last year, in a landmark decision, the court of appeal allowed Mr. Adsani to serve writs for compensation on Kuwait through the British legal system.

It accepted there was a real risk to his life in taking action through the Kuwaiti courts.

Mr. Adsani also issued writs against three members of Kuwait's ruling family, said the Independent.

At the site Monday, many of the workers, who have been subsisting largely on handouts and their meager savings, said they regretted coming.

"The Israelis treat us like animals," said Grigori Maties, a 47-year-old from Romania. "We live here eight to a room, without electricity or heating. No one cares about us. It's inhuman."

Dolin Peretz, a spokeswoman for the Histadrut Labour Federation, said the union was trying to help resolve such problems with legal aid and, in some cases, food handouts.

"The Histadrut is disgusted by the treatment of the foreign workers by the construction companies," she said.

Settlers strike Palestinians

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (R) — Scores of Jewish settlers kicked and shoved Palestinian worshippers on Saturday next to the Hebron Mosque where a settler killed more than 30 Palestinians at prayer one year ago, witnesses said.

They said Israeli soldiers standing guard near the mosque did little to stop about 60 settlers from trying to block Palestinians from entering the mosque, where Muslims were gathering to observe the holiday of Lailat Al Qadr.

Settlers also shoved news photographers at the scene.

Occupied Herbron, long a flashpoint of Arab-Jewish violence, exploded on Feb. 25, 1994, when U.S.-born Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein sprayed automatic fire on kneeling Arabs before survivors of the massacre beat him to death.

Last week, in scenes reminiscent of the seven-year-long Palestinian uprising, Israeli soldiers shot dead one Arab and wounded seven others in Hebron during demonstrations marking the anniversary of the massacre.

Two days later hundreds of settlers defied threats of prosecution and rabbinical condemnation to hold a memorial service at Goldstein's grave in the Hebron-area settlement of Kiryat Arba.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mitterrand in Egypt on private visit

ASWAN, Egypt (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand arrived in the southern Egyptian resort town of Aswan on Thursday for a week-long private visit, officials said on Saturday. Mr. Mitterrand usually spends the Christmas and New Year holidays cruising up the Nile from the ancient pharaonic capital Luxor to Aswan, but could not do so this year due to ill-health, they said. News of his arrival was delayed until Saturday for security reasons. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was due to visit Mr. Mitterrand in Aswan within the next two days, the officials said. The French leader would then go to an area in southern Sinai known as St. Catherine's, site of an ancient monastery believed to be the burial site of the legendary martyr of Alexandria. Mr. Mitterrand is expected to head back to France on March 1, they said.

2 Pakistanis killed in road smash in Cyprus

NICOSIA (AFP) — Two Pakistani students were killed instantly in a road smash in Cyprus early Saturday when their motorcycle was hit by a car driven by a British soldier, police said. Khan Athar Hussain, 18, and his cousin Khan Amrit, 21, were thrown from the bike and the car driven by Sergeant Gareth Austin crashed into a sign on the road between the southern town of Larnaca and the British base of Dhekelia further southeast. Mr. Austin, who fled the scene, was arrested several hours later at his home in the village of Oroklini and was helping police with inquiries, the Cyprus News Agency said. Police said the motorcycle had been ahead of the car which was being driven at excessive speed. Another British soldier in the car was slightly injured and was treated at Larnaca hospital.

Israeli firemen worked secretly in Somalia radio

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ten Israeli firemen worked secretly for nine months in Somalia to help build two firestations even though the two countries do not have diplomatic ties. Israel Radio said Saturday. The 10 were sent to Somalia last year by a private firm, Tahafit based in Nazareth, after a U.N. international appeal to build a firestation at the airport in Mogadishu, the radio said. Before they arrived in Somalia the fire-fighting experts trained about 40 Kenyans in Nairobi who also helped in the construction work, which included a second station close to the U.S. embassy in the Somali capital. One of the firemen, Gideon Leb, told how one of the Israelis was slightly wounded by a shell which fell onto the building site. He added he had also been threatened with death by the head of one of the warring Somali factions, but the man was later arrested.

'Tortured' pilot sues Kuwait for damages

LONDON (AFP) — The Kuwaiti government is to defend itself in a British court against allegations it assisted in the torture of one of its own officers after the Gulf war, the Independent reported Saturday.

The unprecedented legal action, to be heard next month, has been brought by Suleiman Al Adsani, a former Kuwaiti pilot, who is in hiding in Britain after receiving death threats, said the paper.

British courts have historically ruled that foreign governments are immune from prosecution in Britain, but last year, in a landmark decision, the court of appeal allowed Mr. Adsani to serve writs for compensation on Kuwait through the British legal system.

It accepted there was a real risk to his life in taking action through the Kuwaiti courts.

Mr. Adsani also issued writs against three members of Kuwait's ruling family, said the Independent.

Mr. Adsani alleges he later went to the sheikh's palace to find him and remain in the room containing two petrol-soaked mattresses. The sheikh lit a match, leaving him in the room to suffer 25 per cent burns before the fire was put out.

The sheikh allegedly then said he would shoot Mr. Adsani, but the officer replied that his father knew where he was and was expecting him home.

Mr. Adsani was taken to a hospital and warned not to tell anyone.

His father took him to London, where he has been ever since.

Keith Carmichael, of the Redress Trust, which has been helping Mr. Adsani prepare the case, said: "Our hope is that this case will not go to court but that Kuwait will recognise its responsibility and compensate him."

"He should not have to endure more pain and suffering from a protracted legal process."

Ministry prepares

AMMAN (Petra) — A ministry team heads for the autonomous Gaza Strip Sunday for a visit primarily aimed at finding suitable premises to locate a Jordanian representative office which will coordinate with the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the delegation would be led by Ahmad Al Mbeidet and include Hisham and Saeed Ahmad Mbeidet and Saeed Ahmad Hamed.

Officials said the delegation would be informed of the usual and official would be meeting the delegation and assisting it during its stay in the Gaza Strip.

Jordan agreed to open a representative office in the Gaza Strip during talks held between His Majesty King Hussein and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in Amman in late January.

Those talks also led to the signing of a broad accord on coordination and cooperation.

Awqaf min

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abd Al Salam Al Attar opened an Islamic exhibition and another exhibition highlighting the achievements and activities of his ministry in its 10th anniversary.

The two exhibitions, which opened last until the end of the month of Ramadhan, were held at the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman. Several local authorities

Government to o

AMMAN (Petra) — A ministry team will be closed on the 10th in celebration of the holy month of Ramadhan. The ministry issued a circular to resume regular work on March 8. In a circular to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, it was announced that it was organizing a cultural event on Feb. 26, at the King Abdullah Mosque which falls on the 10th.

Kabari invited

AMMAN (Petra) — Fadi Kabari invited to receive an invitation from Hamad Ben Jassim Bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup in Japan.

Ministry prepares

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abd Al Salam Al Attar has instructed His Royal Highness Prince Ali bin Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup in Japan.

Health minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health Dr. Naseer Al Sharif has invited to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup in Japan.

S. Arabian dies in

AMMAN (Petra) — S. Arabian, 20, died Saturday in a collision with a bus on the pick-up truck. Suleiman Dusari, also 20, was

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:35 Manama (GF)
14:25 Moscow (SU)
20:55 Cairo (MS)
26:20 Beirut (ME)
22:25 Istanbul (TK)
01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman ... 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus ... 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus ... 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman ... 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 400
Banana 600 / 400
Bananas (Mukhammar) 600 / 400
Cabbage 120 / 60
Carrot 120 / 60
Cauliflower 120 / 60
Cucumber (large) 140 / 100
Cucumber (small) 300 / 200
Eggplant 170 / 100
Garlic 1100 / 600
Green Beans 400 / 400
Lemon 200 / 100
Marrow (large) 1

Foreign ministry team to find premises for office in Gaza

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Foreign Ministry team heads for the autonomous Gaza Strip on Sunday for a visit primarily aimed at finding suitable premises to locate a Jordanian representative office which will coordinate with the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the delegation would be led by Ahmad Al Hisban and will include Ahmad Mbeideen and Saeed Abdul Hameed.

Officials said the PNA had been informed of the visit, and officials from the self-rule authority would be meeting the delegation and assisting it during its stay in the Gaza Strip.

Jordan agreed to open a representative office in the Gaza Strip during talks held between His Majesty King Hussein and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat in Amman in late January.

Those talks also led to the signing of a broad accord on coordination and cooperation

between Jordan and the self-rule authority as well as agreements on sectoral cooperation.

The officials noted that in view of the agreements signed, it was most essential that Jordan maintains an office in the Gaza Strip to closely coordinate with the PLO-led PNA on various technical issues.

It was not immediately clear what status Jordan was planning to give to the proposed office in Gaza, whether it will be named an interests section, a "contact" bureau or a "representative" office.

But, said an official, "whatever the name, the office will fill in a vital slot in Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation and act as a key reference point for technical issues related to both sides."

At one point earlier, it was reported that Mr. Mbeideen, who now heads the information section of the foreign ministry, was to head the office in Gaza. But Mr. Mbeideen himself denied the report and said he was not aware of any plans by the ministry.

Foreign Minister Abdul

Karim Kabriti was reportedly planning to visit the Gaza Strip early this month, but a short-notice meeting in Washington on Feb. 12 with his Egyptian, Israeli, Palestinian and American counterparts appeared to have preempted the visit.

The officials said the delegation leaving on Sunday will locate a suitable building to house the Jordanian representative office, and that Mr. Kabriti might visit the Gaza Strip to formally open it.

Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have either opened similar offices or announced their intention to do so. Several European countries have also established outposts in the Gaza Strip, and some in the West Bank town of Jericho, which also went under Palestinian autonomy in May.

The PLO has requested the Cairo-based general secretariat of the Arab League to consider the possibilities of locating branches of some of its affiliate organisations in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

The precise status of the PLO request was not immediately known.

houses are taking part in the exhibitions displaying an array of cultural, Islamic, social and economic books.

Upon opening the exhibitions, Dr. Abbadi said that they aim at promoting reading of religious books and spreading Islamic culture.

According to Dr. Abbadi, the ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has prepared an integrated plan for investment in a w q a f lands with the purpose of raising income for

'Schoolmate says she saw murder victim riding in car with man and 2 women'

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA CAMP — A 10-year-old girl who was found murdered in Tabarbour Thursday was last seen riding in a blue car with a man and two women, an eyewitness has said.

"I saw Samar (the victim) waving good-bye and smiling to me as the car drove away," the eyewitness, a schoolmate of the victim, told the victim's family.

The body of Samar Hassan Ghoutheen was discovered by a shepherd in the Tabarbour area of Amman two days after she was re-

ported missing by her family who live in Zarqa camp.

"Police informed us Friday that they found Samar's body in Amman lying near a pile of rocks, and we learned that she had been sodomised before she was killed," a family member told the Jordan Times Saturday.

According to the victim's relative, Samar, a fifth-grader at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) School in Zarqa, returned home on Wednesday and then went to run some errands for her mother.

"Samar's mother asked her to go to the girl's aunt's house to get some food. The aunt gave Samar a sauceman to give to her mother then the child left the house," the family member said. The relative told the family that she was walking in the street and saw Samar in a dark blue car waving at her, and "Samar was not seen after that."

The relative said that Samar's family had no enemies and knows of no one who owns a dark blue car in the camp.

"Until now we can't believe what had happened to

Samar or that she has died; and we have no idea who would commit such an ugly crime," she said.

Samar, one of seven siblings, comes from a family where both parents are unemployed.

The Zarqa police chief refused to reveal any details and said that the case concerns the Amman police.

Annan Police Chief Brigadier General Adel Arnouti confirmed that the girl's body was found and that investigations were continuing into the crime.

But, he added, "we do not know where the rape or

killing took place, but what is more important to us at the moment is to find the killer/s."

The police official said that the authorities have no suspect, but added that "there are high hopes of finding him/them."

Last year on March 12, Lo'ai Oteiqat, an eight-year-old boy who was also reported missing in Zarqa was found sodomised and brutally murdered near Al Hashemieh area four days after his disappearance. A 57-year-old man who was arrested and confessed to committing the crime was executed in July.

'Government to protect Sawt Al Shaab workers'



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khaled Karaki Saturday meets other senior ministry officials and JPA members (Petra photo)

and media matters and in promoting the JPA's professional work and secure freedom of the press, said Dr. Karaki.

He lauded the role of the Jordanian media during the democratic transformation process in Jordan.

For his part, JPA President Suleiman Qudah said the association was willing to cooperate with the ministry to ensure freedom of the press and to solve problems facing journalists.

He said the JPA was com-

mitted to defending the rights of all journalists and will seek to guarantee that they remain employed.

The JPA also is determined to do all that it can to deal with those who violate the rules and ethics of the journalism profession and the JPA law.

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Discussion that followed covered the future of the workers in Sawt Al Shaab

daily, excesses by some weeklies which follow a pattern of exaggeration in dealing with news about crimes and inaccurate reporting of events.

Several cases have been filed against some newspapers for alleged violations of the Press and Publications Law enacted in 1993.

Ministry Secretary General Nayef Moula and Press and Publications Department Director Mohammad Amin were present at the meeting.

Jordan to award contract to get water from Israel

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuter

AMMAN — The government said on Saturday it had awarded a \$5-million contract for a pipeline to carry up to 30 million cubic metres of water from northern Israel in accordance with the terms of the peace treaty.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irshaidat told Reuters the 3.5-kilometre steel pipeline would be built by a local firm and be operational by May 15.

The pipeline will take wa-

ter from Lake Tiberias into the 110-kilometre long King Abdullah Canal irrigating the Jordan Valley, and one-third of it will be inside Israel.

Under the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel, Jordan could get over 150 million cubic metres of water from

various sources if several dams and desalination plants are built, according to Jordanian officials.

The 30-million cubic metres of water to be carried by the pipeline includes 20 million cubic metres stored in Lake Tiberias. It would be pumped between May 15 and Oct. 15, and Israel would provide the rest, floodwater, in winter.

Mr. Irshaidat said the European Union had appointed an Irish consultancy to set engineering terms of references for possible dams on the Jordan River.

He said the ministry also had short-listed four con-

sorships of local and international engineering firms to do a feasibility study on a dam to regulate Yarmouk River waters entering the King Abdullah Canal.

"We expect the study contract to be awarded

sometime next week," he said.

Mr. Irshaidat said the proposed \$7 million dam would yield up to 70 million cubic metres of water a year by better diversion. Israel will also get some 23 million cubic metres of water. A dam could be operating by early 1996.

He said a local consultancy, aided by the Paris-based OTI engineering firm, had completed preliminary studies to develop the barren coast of the Dead Sea.

The multi-million dollar plan includes both infra-

structure and projects such as spas to use the mineral-rich water for sports and to treat skin diseases.

A master plan for 60 square kilometres is to be shown to local and foreign investors. Israeli developments on its side of the sea attract thousands of tourists.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

★ Film entitled "The Learning Tree" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m.

PLAYS

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Mask" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

POETRY FESTIVAL

★ Poetry festival with the participation of Dr. Walid Sayf and Dr. Izzeddin Mansur at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Display of Bani Hamida new designs of

rugs at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696).

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Sabah Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 668701).

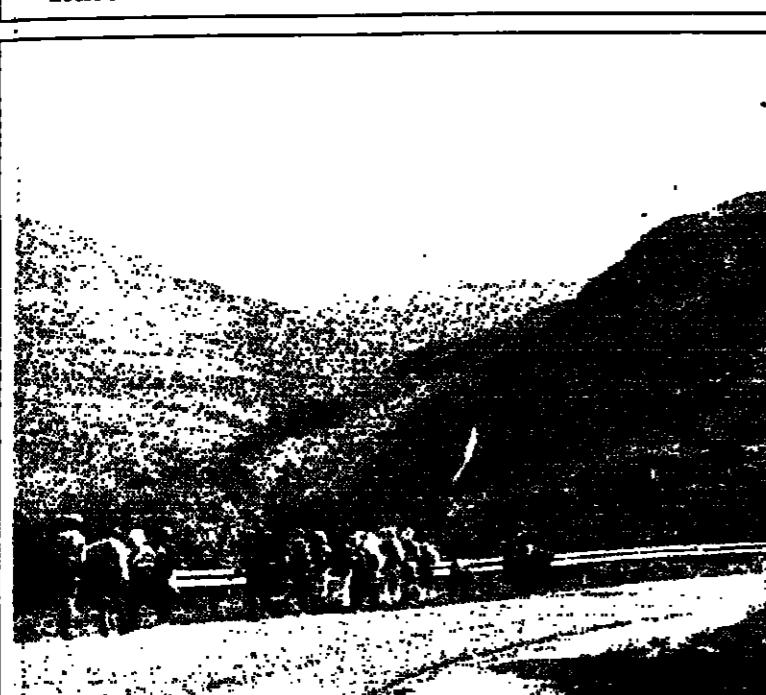
★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmig Kuyumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Centre.

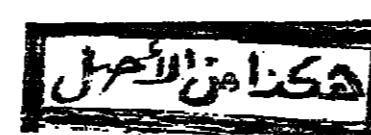
★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al-Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.



Interfaith pilgrims pray and walk for peace through Jordan part of mission (Photos by Peter, an interfaith pilgrim)



Masked gunmen kill 20 Shi'ites in attacks on Karachi mosques

KARACHI (R) — Masked gunmen killed 20 worshippers in dawn assaults on two Shi'ite Muslim mosques in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi Saturday, police said.

The attacks, among the bloodiest in a series of tit-for-tat killings between militant Sunnis and Shi'ite factions, raised fears of further violence in Karachi, where 153 people have died this month in ethnic and sectarian unrest.

Javed Iqbal, deputy inspector general of Karachi police, told a news conference that the identity of the assailants

was not yet known and police had made no arrests.

He said gunmen fired Kalashnikov assault rifles at people praying at a Shi'ite place of worship, known as an Imambargah, in the east Karachi district of Fib Colony, at about 6:10 a.m. (0110 GMT) before beginning their dawn-to-dusk Ramadan fast.

Three worshippers died on the spot and three in hospital.

Twenty minutes later, three armed men burst into the Mehfil-i-Murtaza Imambargah off Shahid-i-Millat Road, killing six worshippers instantly. Eight died later of their wounds. One survived,

but was in serious condition, Mr. Iqbal said.

"We heard gunshots and came out of the house to see people running out of the mosque and driving away in a white car," Ghulam Ali, who lives nearby, told Reuters at the scene.

"We went inside and saw people lying in a pool of blood. Some of the wounded were crying and weeping," he said.

Among the dead was the imam, or prayer leader, Maulvi Ayub Sabri, and three watchmen, one of whom had been forced from the entrance of the compound into the mosque at gunpoint.

Iqbal said a police vehicle had been guarding the Imambargah all night but had left the area minutes before the attack.

Hassan Turabi, secretary-general of the militant Shi'ite Tehrik-i-Jafria Pakistan (TJP), accused Sunnis of mounting the current Muslim fasting month of Ramazan in the bustling port city, where gunmen shot dead six people Friday.

Turabi said the sectarian violence was due to a plot by the United States, with the complicity of the Pakistani government, to crush Muslims by setting them against each other.

"We will fight the government of Pakistan and the United States, who are behind all these killings, instead of turning our guns on our Sunni brothers," he said.

Shi'ites make up an estimated 15 per cent of Pakistan's mainly Sunni population of around 125 million.

A spokesman for the radical Shi'ite group Sipah-i-Mohammed accused the SSP of carrying out the mosque killings and blamed the government for igniting sectarian strife.

"You can expect retaliation from the Shi'ite side soon," said the spokesman, who asked not to be named.

Mr. Iqbal said armed policemen had been posted at selected mosques in sensitive areas of Karachi. "Police will keep a round-the-clock vigil," he said.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility and SSP officials could not be reached for comment.

Mohammad Salim Khan, the government-appointed commissioner of Karachi, told the news conference that peace committees had been set up in the city to try to defuse sectarian tension.

The attacks followed a day of protests by Islamic mili-

tants across Pakistan Friday against a Lahore High Court decision to acquit two Christians sentenced to hang for blasphemy.

Policemen in Lahore said Friday they had used teargas and batons to quell Sunni and Shi'ite demonstrators and had arrested at least 150 people. A dozen people were wounded, including a policeman stabbed during a Shi'ite-led protest.

Ethnic, sectarian and political violence killed at least 300 people last year in Karachi, a metropolis of 12 million people.

Tension between Sunnis and minority Shi'ites has mounted in the current Muslim fasting month of Ramazan in the bustling port city, where gunmen shot dead six people Friday.

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Young activists belonging to Islamic religious parties chant slogans against the government of Pakistan; premier Benazir Bhutto outside the High Court building, Lahore High Court is reviewing the blasphemy case against Christian youths Salman Masih and Rahmat Masih, who were sentenced to hang by a lower court (AFP photo)

Foot sues paper over spying claim

LONDON (AP) — Michael Foot is suing Rupert Murdoch and two of his Sunday newspapers for libel over a report the KGB regarded the former Labour Party leader as an important contact in the 1960s.

The report in the Sunday Times and News Of The World last Sunday also suggested that the politician took money from KGB agents to finance his left-wing newspaper.

"These allegations... accuse him of treachery to his country and have been made even though the Sunday Times had every reason to believe they were untrue," David Price, Mr. Foot's lawyer, said Friday.

Mr. Foot, he said, "holds Oleg Gordievsky personally responsible for this McCarthy smear..."

"Because of the gravity of

these lies, Mr. Foot has decided to bring Rupert Murdoch before the jury."

Mr. Foot, 81, who led Labour in opposition to the governing Conservatives from 1980 to 1983, has called the allegations "a big lie."

"As far as I know I have never met or seen a KGB agent in my life," he told another national newspaper.

Sunday Times editor John Witherow said Friday that the newspaper will "vigorously defend" the libel action.

In a statement, he said the newspaper had never alleged Mr. Foot was a spy, but that the KGB had regarded him, among others, as an "agent of influence."

Mr. Foot, he said, "holds Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB colonel who was also secretly working for British intelli-

gence, and six other former KGB officers."

Col. Gordievsky, who defected to Britain in 1985, told the news agency Press Association this week that the Sunday Times story was entirely correct.

But in an interview with BBC Radio Saturday, Mikhail Lyubimov, a retired

Sunday Times editor John Witherow said Friday that the newspaper will "vigorously defend" the libel action.

Col. Lyubimov said agents often bluffed their controllers in Moscow to boost their own careers by inventing informants.

In a radio interview from Moscow this week, another of the Sunday Times' sources, former KGB agent Viktor Kubeykin, said the newspaper took his remarks out of context.

Mrs. Mandella was reported Saturday to be planning to cut short the unauthorized visit to west Africa.

The Citizen newspaper of Johannesburg quoted her private secretary Alan Reynolds as saying Mrs. Mandella would return early but not before attending a meeting in Ghana with President Jerry Rawlings and west African culture ministers.

The paper quoted Mr. Reynolds as saying the meeting would end on Tuesday. Mrs. Mandella's trip was originally due to last two weeks.

Mr. Mankahiana said from Cape Town Saturday he did not know if Mrs. Mandella was planning to return early.

Asked if there was any discussion of removing her from her post as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, Mr. Mankahiana said: "I don't know."

Mrs. Mandella's office Thurs-

Defiant Mrs. Mandela flies to Burkina Faso

OUAGADOUGOU (R) — A defiant Winnie Mandela flew into Burkina Faso to attend an African Film Festival as South Africa's deputy minister of culture, despite an order from President Nelson Mandela to cancel the trip.

Mrs. Mandela, the estranged wife of the South African president, made no comment to reporters on the latest controversy to strike her when she arrived Friday night.

She was looking forward to the Pan African Film Festival which opened Saturday and was struck by the poverty of west Africa compared to South Africa.

"It's depressing to see that in some ways Africa is still how it was 30 years ago," she told reporters on the plane.

Earlier Friday Mrs. Mandela, South Africa's deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, met Ivory Coast's Culture Minister Bernard Zadi Zaourou, who gave her a sculpture repre-

senting an African woman, bolts of colourful woven cloth, and a pair of traditional chief's sandals.

She also held talks with African Development Bank President Babacar Ndiaye.

South African presidential spokesman Parks Mankahana said Thursday that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, on President Mandela's instructions, had told Mrs. Mandela to cancel the trip.

The deputy minister subsequently wrote to the president explaining why it was important to proceed with the trip. The deputy minister departed, as scheduled, before the consultation on her resubmitted request could be completed, he said.

Mr. Mankahana told Reuters later that government rules required a minister to have the president's permission for any trip out of the country. "Mrs. Mandela did not have that permission when she left," he said.

But a statement issued by Mrs. Mandela's office Thurs-

day night said she was visiting west Africa in her official capacity.

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Cyclone continues to hammer Australia

PERTH (R) — Rescue officials were searching for eight fishermen missing after a cyclone generating winds of up to 250 kilometres an hour hammered Australia's north-west coast Saturday and began moving inland.

Police said two boats carrying six fishermen had been located, but one boat with three passengers and another with five were still missing after the fury of cyclone Bob moved in from the Indian Ocean early Saturday.

"It could be that their communications systems are damaged or their boats have capsized — we just don't know," Western Australian State Emergency Service duty officer Stuart Cowie told Reuters.

Residents of the fishing village of Onslow, about 1,400 kilometres north of Perth, bore the brunt of the storm.

Bobby hit the town early Saturday, tearing the roofs from about 30 homes, uprooting trees and cutting power and water supplies.

Although Mr. Clinton's approval ratings have climbed into the 50 per cent range, he is seen as vulnerable following last November's elections when Republicans grabbed full control of Congress for the first time in 40 years.

Sen. Gramm's declaration was little more than a formality since the Texas senator has been actively campaigning for months and planning his assault on the White House for at least five years, but it marks a new phase in the 1996 campaign.

Mr. Gramm, the presidential candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was shot dead last March 23 at the end of a campaign rally in the northern city of Tijuana, just over the border from San Diego, California.

Colosio, who as PRI candidate was virtually certain to

up to the test," he declared.

Absent from Sen. Gramm's speech was any mention of the kind of social issues close to the hearts of many Christian Evangelicals, a growing power in the Republican Party. He did not utter the words "abortion" or "school prayer."

From Texas, long his home, Sen. Gramm was flying to his birthplace of Columbus, Ga., where he was to speak in front of the elementary school where he failed the third grade and received the endorsement of all the state's Republican members of Congress except House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Gingrich is remaining neutral in the Republican race.

Gen. Gramm, a former Democrat who switched parties in 1983, is a balding, studious man with strong conservative convictions, iron determination but little charisma. But no one doubts his organisational strength.

And I'll do my best for you, your honour," Ms. Lopez said through a Spanish-language interpreter before slipping out of sight with her lawyer.

Analysts estimate he will

soon have about \$12 million, an incredible sum so early in the race and far more than any rival in a campaign where ability to travel, hire support staff and buy television advertising time will be crucial.

Sen. Gramm said he would examine every federal programme and ask if it was worth taking tax money from people like Flatt to pay for them.

"And let me tell you something: There are not a lot of programmes that will stand

to be cut," he said.

Analysts estimate he will soon have about \$12 million, an incredible sum so early in the race and far more than any rival in a campaign where ability to travel, hire support staff and buy television advertising time will be crucial.

Defence attorneys say Ms.

Lopez will be a crucial alibi witness, but legal experts said she is now vulnerable to scathing attack by the prosecution.

The defence is really

throwing the dice with Rosa Lopez," Los Angeles defence attorney Jay Jaffe told KCBS Television.

Among other things, she at

the 100th anniversary of the start of Cuba's War of Independence against Spain.

Mr. Alarcon, a former foreign minister, furiously attacked the U.S. bill's key sponsor, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Jesse Helms.

"He's a personality of old fascist, racist lineage," said Mr. Alarcon, who lived for years in the United States as

midnight.

Then, when prosecutor

Marcia Clark reminded him that she had two small children to attend to, Judge Ito said sheepishly. "I plain for got," and changed course once again, ordering Ms. Lopez to return to court Monday to testify.

Telling Ms. Lopez he could

have her jailed if she tried to flee before then, Judge Ito asked: "You promise me that you will obey my order to return?"

"Yes," Ms. Lopez re-

sponded but she added, "I don't want any reporters at the hotel."

By then, the jurors had

already arrived at the court-

house, the normally immaculately attired panelists now

dressed mostly in blue jeans

and sweat suits. Judge Ito

called them for a brief ex-

planation and apology. "This

is going to be an unusual trial," he told them.

Defence Attorney Johnnie

Cochran told jurors in his opening statement that Ms.

Lopez would be a crucial alibi

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A woman pushes a pram containing some of her belongings on a street of Grozny, ruined and deserted. The situation in Grozny remains calm (AFP photo)

Chechens defend deserted ruin of a town

ARGUN, Russia (R) — A lone Chechen cyclist pedals furiously along devastated Lenin Street in Argun as Russian machine-gun bullets explode behind him.

He escapes down an alley, chased by the shriek of gas from a ruptured high-

pressure line.

Helicopters beat the air ominously across the Argun River, resupplying Russian troops positioned for an all-out assault on this strategic town 19 kilometers east of the Chechen capital Grozny.

With Grozny finally encircled after two months of fighting, the Russians need Argun to reach Gudermes, a vital junction on the rail line linking Moscow to oil-rich Azerbaijan.

Most civilians have abandoned Argun, fleeing south to join over 200,000 others displaced by Russia's bid to crush tiny Chechenya's bid for independence.

Local military officials say only a few hundred of Argun's pre-war population of 11,000 are still here. Most are underground to escape Russian shells and sniper fire.

Only Chechen fighters roam the streets, waiting for a show-down potentially as disastrous as the battle for Grozny, where Russian troops finally triumphed with huge losses to both sides.

The Russians think we have a lot of professional fighters in this town but some of our men only began using Kalashnikovs (automatic rifles) a few days ago," said Akhmed, a Chechen fighter guiding reporters through the shell-blasted town.

"Look at us, we're the Chechen special forces," jokes one of Akhmed's lightly-armed comrades heading off to the front.

Grim determination rather than bravado typifies the men defending Argun, many of whom fought in Grozny and know what they are up against here.

Chechens with Kalashnikovs and shoulder-fired grenade launchers battled Russian tanks for weeks in the narrow streets of Grozny.

only to be driven out in the end by incessant shelling and aerial bombardment.

Having learned a lesson in Grozny, the Russians have avoided direct infantry contact with the Chechens in Argun for nearly two weeks — preferring instead to pound the town with mortar, tank and artillery fire.

The level of destruction increases as Akhmed's walking tour moves reporters closer to Russian lines along the Argun River, which snakes north and west of the town.

Roofless, windowless houses are everywhere in Argun, but all the buildings on the northern edge of town have been destroyed.

Some narrow lanes near the front are virtually impassable even on foot — choked by downed trees, power lines and the rubble of collapsed houses.

Walls left standing are pitted by shrapnel and sniper fire, which occasionally rips past from Russian positions only 300 metres away across the river.

Chechen defenders are dug into cellars and reinforced timber bunkers along the way, watching and waiting for the Russian assault they expect any day.

"It's very simple, they have more men and better weapons than we do," Akhmed says of the Chechen predicament.

"We have better morale, better heart. The Chechens are fighting for their homes but the Russian soldier doesn't know why he's here."



A woman weeps at the grave of her husband near their destroyed home in Grozny (AFP photo)

North Korea's defence minister dies

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korean Defence Minister O Jin-U, the second most powerful man in the reclusive state's hierarchy, died early Saturday of cancer at the age of 78, Pyongyang Radio reported.

Broadcasts monitored here said Marshal O, who flew to Paris for medical treatment last year, died at 2:30 a.m. (1830 GMT) in a Pyongyang hospital.

He outlived the Stalinist nation's late leader and his old comrade-in-arms, Kim Il-Sung, who died July 8, by only eight months.

North Korea's new de facto leader, Kim Jong-Il, 53, whose succession to power had been fiercely protected by Marshal O, visited him in hospital in Pyongyang the day before he died, KCNA said.

"Comrade O Jin-U shed hot tears, deeply moved by Kim Jong-Il's call on him at the hospital," KCNA said, indicating that death had been expected.

Marshal O's death leaves Kim Jong-Il as the last remaining member of the permanent standing committee of the Stalinist state's Workers' Party, southern radio monitors said.

"Marshal of the Korean People's Army O Jin-U, member of the presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, first vice chairman of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK (North Korea)... died after a long illness from cancer," the radio said.

His body was lying in state in the Feb. 8 House of Culture and a 240-member state funeral committee had been formed, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

Mourners were invited to pay their last respects Saturday afternoon and would be received through Tuesday, ahead of a state funeral Wednesday, KCNA said.

Marshal O was the highest-

ranking veteran of the first generation "revolutionaries" who fought alongside Kim Il-Sung against Japanese colonial rule.

In his last television appearance at a ceremony marking 100 days since Kim Il-Sung's death, the old marshal was seen limping to the junior Kim's side on the review dais, upright but frail and weak and leaning on a young soldier for support.

Marshal O was known as a staunch supporter of the Junior Kim, 53, Supreme Commander of the North's more than one million strong armed forces. The military's loyalty is considered vital to Mr. Kim's assuming full power.

Analysts here predicted no sudden change in the hierarchy or in Kim Jong-Il's formal succession to the country's two top posts after Marshal O's death, saying it had been long expected.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam said Saturday the situation in North Korea is "abnormal" after the death of longtime leader Kim Il Sung and defies any predictions.

"No one can say for sure how South-North (Korea) relations would evolve but time is on our side," Mr. Kim told local reporters.

Nearly eight months after Kim Il Sung died last July, North Korea is still a headless state. His son and apparent heir, Kim Jong Il, has not formally taken power.

On Saturday, North Korea lost Defence Minister O, who ranked No. 2 in hierarchy after King Jong Il.

The South Korean president said North Korea's anti-Seoul policy remains unchanged, despite the worldwide trend toward detente. He deplored the fact that the North's media uses vitriolic language to make personal attacks on him.

Although the two Koreas agreed in 1993 to stop propaganda directed at each other, the North's official spokesman said the move to cancel the drill, which Pyongyang calls a rehearsal for war, had been issued in anticipation of the North's full compliance with its nuclear accord with Washington.



Undated file picture shows North Korean Minister of Armed Forces Marshal O Jin-U. The 78-year-old comrade-in-arms of President Kim Il-Sung and staunch supporter of his reclusive son, Kim Jong-Il, died early Saturday of cancer (AFP photo)

project, only if their reactor model is adopted.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord Saturday reaffirmed that the nuclear reactors must come from South Korea.

"The reactors provided to North Korea must be South Korean reactors," said Mr. Lord before leaving after two days of intensive talks here.

Immediately after Mr. Lord's departure, the South Korean Defence Ministry announced that Seoul and Washington had agreed to cancel their massive annual joint military exercise called Team Spirit.

A Defence Department interview from Cueva De Los Tayos, Mr. Fujimori said he had heard heavy bombardment in the disputed patch of Amazon jungle overnight and some mortar rounds in the morning but that fighting appeared to be dying down.

In a satellite telephone interview from Cueva De Los Tayos, Mr. Fujimori said he had heard heavy bombardment at the site of the explosion.

Flights to Sarajevo Airport suspended

'Serbs terrorise Bosnia Muslims'

SARAJEVO (R) — Serbs have launched a fresh terror campaign against Muslims in northern Bosnia, beating and robbing civilians, a major abuse of human rights, U.N. refugee spokesman Kris Janowski said Saturday.

He said the Serbs' goal was to complete an "ethnic cleansing" operation to drive the last non-Serbs out of the area.

The attacks on Muslim families violated the terms of a four-month ceasefire which took effect in Bosnia at the start of the year and which is coming under increasing pressure.

The U.N. was forced to suspend flights to Sarajevo Airport Saturday after gunfire hit a cargo aircraft as it landed.

Mr. Janowski told reporters: "In Gradiska (northern Bosnia) for the past month, Muslim houses have been systematically robbed and their occupants terrorised."

Amed men in uniform had severely beaten Muslim civi-

lans and ransacked their houses in villages around the Serb-held region of Banja Luka, site of ethnic expulsions of non-Serbs through out the war.

Whole villages were asking to be evacuated, Mr. Janowski said. One Muslim man and his son had been shot and seriously wounded while another house had been targeted by a handgrenade.

"These are the last finishing touches of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia Krajina (northern Bosnia). That's basically what it is," he said. "And it is being condoned by the authorities."

He said the attacks made a mockery of human rights in general and Bosnia's current ceasefire accord, which obliged the combatants to respect human rights, in particular.

On Feb. 15, in the hamlet of Dzubu southeast of Banja Luka, three armed men beat a woman, threatened to rape

her and demanded her valuables while holding a gun to her head, according to U.N. field workers.

"They also held a knife to her child's throat and threatened to kill her mother-in-law," Mr. Janowski said. "Eventually they got 300 Deutsche marks. That was all the family had. But they still beat up the family afterwards."

The armed gang attacked another house nearby and other families fled to escape the assault. Their houses were also ransacked.

The armed men warned when they left that "they would be back soon."

The UNCHR had only received word of the incidents Friday and planned to raise the issue with Bosnian Serb authorities. But Mr. Janowski said the Bosnian Serb leadership has never made good on promises to halt ethnic expulsions during the course of the war.

"Since the authorities have

never done anything to curb these activities they are ultimately responsible," he said.

"We are not buying excuses these are rogue elements or that these people are out of control. We know from the past if the authorities wanted to establish control they could do it."

Serb "ethnic cleansing" continued to drive out Muslims and Croats from Serb-held territory. More than 250 civilians from northern Bosnia had crossed from lines into Bosnian government held territory at Turbe in the past few days, he said.

"There's a constant movement of people (out) and it can be explained by the way the remaining minority is being treated," he said.

Some 500,000 Croats and Muslims lived in the Banja Luka region before the war in Bosnia began in April 1992. Mr. Janowski said perhaps some 30,000 remain but it was difficult to estimate as civilians continued to be expelled.

Fujimori escapes mortar fire at the front

LIMA (R) — Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori came under mortar fire Friday as he trekked back from a jungle conflict zone with Ecuador, but no one in his group was injured, press reports said.

Mr. Fujimori, accompanied by soldiers, security personnel and reporters was hiking down a muddy trail when three mortar rounds banged down, one just 50 yards (metres) from the group, local television and radio reports said.

The president's group was walking back from a two-day journey to the Cueva De Los Tayos outpost a few miles from the Peru-Ecuador border when the barrage came, according to press reports.

"There are no personal tragedies to report. The president, in great spirits, decided to continue the march," said reporter Guido Lombardi of Radioparamos Del Peru.

Reports of the attack could not be independently confirmed. Mr. Fujimori made no statements to the press afterward.

Meanwhile, an advance team of international observers in the afternoon returned from PV-1, Peru's command post near the disputed border area, to the northern coastal city of Piura.

But the head of the delegation, Brazilian Gen. Ariel Pereira Da Fonseca, told a press conference only that the mission's members had been impressed by the ruggedness of the terrain and high spirits of Peru's troops.

The observers, who Thursday visited a post on the Ecuador side in the month-old conflict, was slated to leave Peru for Brazil early Saturday.

Mr. Fujimori was two hours from PV-1 when the mortar attack came, according to reports. The three shells landed within 100 yards of Fujimori, according to the reports. Several reporters were shaken by the attack, Mr. Lombardi said.

Earlier Friday, Peru's military accused Ecuador of violating a ceasefire agreed to last week by bombing and firing artillery at Peruvian positions at Cueva De Los Tayos, Base Sur and Tintuza in the remote patch of Amazon jungle over the last three days.

In a statement, the Peruvian Armed Forces charged Ecuadorian troops had bombed the area "despite knowing that the president of the republic... was in the area."

The Peruvian military also accused Ecuador of "indiscriminate use" of treaty-banned anti-personnel landmines and denied an Ecuadorian charge that its own forces had used toxic gas and flamethrowers.

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Give 'AUA' a chance

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE in the country might receive a boost should the project to establish an American-style university materialise. So far, the sponsors of the plan are getting stiff opposition, especially from the Council of Higher Education. The Secretary General of the council damped the hopes of the supporters of the idea when he said last week that "it is unlikely to be approved." Pouring cold water on the promoters of the ambitious plan was made easy by the existing three-year old resolution that forbids the creation of new private universities in governorates which already have institutions of higher learning. Amman, in particular, is being stated, is already saturated with five universities and this in itself poses a formidable obstacle. Another argument being advanced by the opposition to the plan is based on the fact that the country has 17 universities already with a student body of more than 60,000. This, it is feared, will unduly spread university education and create a flood of over-qualified graduates that the market cannot absorb.

We find both arguments short-sighted. For starters, the country needs quality university education that is not currently available. It is not just the number of learning institutions that counts but also the quality of education provided. There can be no doubt that under current conditions, the level of our universities is clearly inferior to what is available outside the country, especially in the West. The best evidence of this is the fact that thousands of Jordanians still seek education in the U.S., Europe and other regions of the world. Existing universities may find the competition from an American-styled university too stiff to face but through such competition our national universities would be forced to improve in every sense of the word.

Imagine also the savings to the national economy that could be realised should we make alternative styles of education available to Jordanians. Moreover the kind of revenues that could be generated if Amman becomes an attractive place for academic excellence on par with what is being offered by the AUB in Beirut would be substantial. As for the equally falacious argument that more universities would mean more "unaffordable" university graduates, it can be easily rebutted by the proposition that with or without an AUA, Jordanian students would still seek higher education if not locally then in foreign lands come what may and at the end pose the same challenge. It appears, therefore, that the opposition to an AUA does not have arguments strong enough to dismiss the idea as a whole. The only condition that we would apply in this context is the need to make sure that the proposed "AUA" is fully accredited by the U.S.A. Otherwise, the proposal needs to be given a chance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday accused the United States of seeking to clamp U.S.-Israeli hegemony on the Arab region through the peace process. The U.S. administration refuses to put an end to Israel's escalation of tension triggered by its raids on southern Lebanon and is unwilling to force Israel to evacuate the Golan and Southern Lebanon as a means of ending the deadlock on the Syrian-Israeli tracks, said the daily. Being the sponsor of the peace process, and having claimed that it was seeking to play the role of a full partner in the peace-making process, the United States is refusing to end the Egyptian-Israeli dispute over Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), refuses to mediate to end the deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over the implementation of the Oslo agreement and seeks international backing to its quest to retain the U.N. embargo on Iraq. The paper said that the U.S.-Israeli alliance, which in the past was forged to stem Soviet influence, is now aiming at subjugating the Arab Nation.

A WRITER in Al Dustour discussed the continued U.N. sanctions on Iraq, saying that it is a well-known fact that the United States was perpetuating the embargo for its own selfish interests. Many nations, including those which took part in the U.S.-led coalition that launched war on Baghdad, have voiced their desire to end the embargo and the injustice against the Iraqi people, said Mohammad Kawash. But the writer said it is regrettable that these nations are not backing their sympathy with practical steps to see to it that the injustice is removed, and are only offering the Iraqis lip service despite their knowledge that Baghdad has implemented all U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Lavish exemptions cost millions

BELIEVE IT or not, the generous exemptions contained in the Law on Encouraging Investment is costing the Treasury 29 million Jordanian Dinars (JD) a year. Needless to say, most of those investments enjoying the long tax holiday were to take place any way, irrespective of these exemptions, as a case by case study would reveal. It is obviously much easier for the minister of finance to grant an exemption that costs JD 1 million than to issue a cheque in the same amount, and for the same person. Disbursement of funds is visible operation that needs a budget and it subjected to checking, while the cost of exemptions is not visible, has no ceiling, and does not need appropriation.

The issue may be of psychological or political nature. But from an objective point of view, exemption is costly. It does not differ from any other cash outlay or expenditure.

Having that in mind, it is worth us while to identify the cost of exemptions that are thrown away right and left and centre, for good reasons sometimes, without justification more often and under the pressure of special interest groups always.

Let us single out one category of tax payers, the shareholding companies, and make some calculations of the cost of various exemptions applicable to them. The calculations revealed the following solid and documented,

but shocking, facts:

— The cost of deductibility of paid interest despite the existence of tax exempt interest received is JD 16.7 million annually.

— The cost of exempting dividends received by companies on their portfolios of shares in the capital of other companies is JD 1.22 million a year.

— The tax foregone in favour of approved economic projects under the Law on Encouraging Investment reached a staggering amount of JD 28.85 million in 1992, yet the government has in mind a more generous tax holidays for new investments.

— The exemption of agricultural activities, which is meant to help farmers and peasants, is saving shareholding companies JD 1 million per year.

— The partial exemption of profits related to exports was costing the Treasury some JD 1.25 million in 1992. The cost must have doubled after the recent sweeping exemptions of profits from exports which were introduced in 1993.

— If the government accepted the proposition of unifying the rate of corporate tax at 35 per cent, the proceeds of the tax will be slashed by JD 13.13 million.

In other words, the taxing of interest payable by non-financial companies will raise the proceeds by 23.2 per

cent. Applying income tax for dividends earned by companies will yield 1.7 per cent more.

The abolishing of the investment law will raise the proceeds of corporate tax by 40.1 per cent.

Removal of agricultural exemption will require companies as a group to pay 1.4 per cent more.

The lifting of tax exemption on exports will raise the revenue from companies by 1.7 to 3.5 per cent.

If we contemplate a unified rate of corporate tax at say 35 per cent, the Treasury should be ready to lose 18.3 per cent of its current receipts from companies.

We are not suggesting that exemptions should be cancelled all together in order to enhance revenue. We only want to put these exemptions under scrutiny, to identify their actual cost and to make sure that the benefits meant by the legislator outweigh the cost involved.

It is disappointing that the new government committed itself in advance to present to Parliament in a new law of income tax, which will not touch some of the most unreasonable exemptions. In this case, the only option remaining for the minister of finance is to appear pressure groups, especially banks, by granting them even more exemptions, irrespective of the cost involved.



Creation of new European security architecture under way

By Richard C. Holbrooke

The Clinton administration has assigned top foreign policy priority to the creation of a new European security architecture that will establish a viable structure for broad European security cooperation in the coming years.

It will be a multi-track effort involving all of the countries of Europe, the United States and Canada. As U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said, this new structure must be inclusive and cooperative, and Russia must play an important role in it.

The new European security architecture is essential both for defining the U.S. role in a new Europe and for ensuring the development of a lasting peace across the entire continent.

Two initiatives launched by the United States in early December are designed to establish its basis. Ministerial meetings of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Council and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in Brussels and in the Budapest Summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) set in motion processes for advancing the concept.

In Brussels, allied foreign ministers agreed on a gradual, transparent process leading to NATO enlargement; strengthening of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme with non-member European countries, many of them former members of the Warsaw Pact; and developing a stronger relationship between NATO and Russia outside the PFP framework.

In Budapest, action was taken to enhance OSCE's role in European security and conflict management.

The United States does not believe the NATO alliance can or should be the universal security structure in Europe. Instead, we believe NATO and the European Union (EU) should gradually project our common democratic values eastward through cooperative programmes and eventual enlargement while the OSCE works to develop a broader, more inclusive forum for consultation and action on issues not within the responsibilities of NATO and the EU.

Special emphasis must be placed on conflict prevention and crisis management, and the OSCE can serve as a consultative framework in this regard. Since NATO remains the foundation for

the security of all the EU countries, its expansion and that of the EU should be mutually supportive.

During the first half of this year, the NATO governments will examine how the alliance will be enlarged, what principles will guide this process, and what the implications of expanded membership will be.

During the second half of 1995, NATO will begin initial consultations and deliberations with interested partners. It's likely this process will include presentation of principles to guide NATO thinking on expansion, the "how" of enlargement, and the implications of membership for potential new members.

Stability in Europe is a critical goal of an expanded NATO. Expansion is not directed against anyone, and even more importantly, it is not intended to create new lines of division in Europe.

At the December NATO ministerial, Secretary Christopher suggested several fundamental principles to guide expansion. The process will be gradual, deliberate, and transparent. There will be extensive consultations with all interested parties and, as he put it, there will be "no surprises." Premature discussion of a time frame for expansion of specific countries for membership will be avoided. The focus this year will be on the "how" and "why" of expansion, not the "who" or "when."

While there will be no rigid criteria for membership, certain fundamental requirements are reflected in the Washington Treaty, NATO's founding document. New members must assume all the rights and obligations of membership; they must conform to certain basic precepts including democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law; they must be in a position to further the principles of the treaty and contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

Nations interested in becoming NATO members will be considered individually on a country-by-country basis. Some countries will enter NATO before others, and no country outside of NATO will have a veto over another's future membership in the alliance.

The decision to move towards NATO expansion does not downgrade the importance of the Partnership for Peace. Indeed, we see PFP assuming an even more important role as a framework for the evolution of NATO's rela-

tionship with the new democracies to the east.

For some of these new partners, PFP will be the best path to eventual NATO membership. For others, it will provide concrete evidence that NATO is concerned with their security and offers the primary means for lasting cooperation with NATO and other partners in such areas as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. To this end, NATO is committed to expediting the implementation of individual partnership programmes and will increase the number of joint land and maritime exercises with partner nations this year.

The NATO ministers affirmed that a cooperative European security architecture requires an active partnership with Russia, and they endorsed a broad agenda for NATO's relations with Russia, both within and outside the Partnership for Peace. This will be an important element in our multi-track approach to European security, and as NATO defines its expanded role in Europe, it will be essential to pursue a parallel track of dialogue with Russia.

This new security structure must be inclusive and cooperative, and Russia will play an important role in it.

Decisions taken at the Budapest summit strengthen OSCE and define an enhanced OSCE role in European security. The measures adopted at Budapest complement efforts within NATO to pursue cooperative, integrated security structures for Europe, and they provide OSCE with increased abilities and resources.

Leaders attending the Budapest summit made a political commitment to turn to the OSCE as the primary instrument in areas covered by its mission. Making OSCE a more robust organisation capable of taking meaningful steps in regional conflict prevention helps solidify our approach to a new, inclusive European security architecture. The strengthened OSCE will give all states in the Euro-Atlantic community a forum in which they can expect their security concerns to be seriously addressed.

These decisions, however, do not make OSCE a substitute for NATO, nor do they make it a tool to end wars such as the one in Bosnia. It is rather meant to efficiently address, and prevent escalation of conflict at the low end of the scale — or as President Bill Clinton

(The author is U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs and one of the key Clinton administration officials responsible for developing the new European Security Architecture). The article is provided by USIS.

Fears of violence engulf Zulu land

By Craig Doerner
Reuter

DURBAN, South Africa —

The boycott of South Africa's parliament by chief

Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party has

sparked fears of fresh violence in the volatile Zulu

heartland of KwaZulu-Natal.

Mr. Buthelezi led Inkatha out of parliament in

Cape Town on Tuesday,

accusing the rival African National Congress (ANC) of failing to honour an agreement for foreign mediation over constitutional differences between them.

Violence monitors and

political analysts said on

Wednesday Mr. Buthelezi's

action could escalate ten-

sion in KwaZulu-Natal,

where thousands of people

have died in political feud-

ing between Inkatha and

the ANC over the past de-

cade.

Violence subsided after

the country's first-all-race

elections in April last year,

but it surged to 116 deaths

last month in the Inkatha-

controlled province amid

rising tension over Mr.

Buthelezi's mediation demands.

The ANC swept the

national vote and captured

seven of the nine provinces,

with Inkatha taking

KwaZulu-Natal.

"The level of violence,

the fatalities have always

been highest when there

have been boycotts and

walkouts and threats. These

are the times when deaths

are highest," said Professor

Alexander Johnston of the

University of Natal.

Inkatha will hold a

national congress on March

5 and 6 to decide whether to

make permanent its provi-

onal two-week walkout from

the country's 10-month-old democratic par-

liament.

Political analysts said ten-

sions escalated in KwaZulu-

Natal, home to around six

million members of South

Israel widens blockade

(Continued from page 1)

States, Russia and Europe to intervene to end the naval blockade and Israeli aggression in South Lebanon.

At a Friday evening banquet for Muslim notables Mr. Hrawi, a Christian, said Israeli attacks were further hurting the deadlocked Syrian and Lebanese peace talks with Israel, which are sponsored by the United States and Russia.

"We call upon the two sponsors, Europe and sisterly and friendly peace-loving countries to help us stop the tragedy in the south," Mr. Hrawi said. "It is impossible that we should pay the price for battlefield eruptions and peace process impasses."

The appeal was echoed earlier in the day by the foreign undersecretary, Zafer Hassan.

After a meeting with Mr. Hassan, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Ronald Schleicher demanded all sides "exercise restraint and seek ways to ease tensions."

He made the appeal amid fears in Beirut of a major Israeli operation in the south where Israel occupation forces frequently shell villages in fighting with Muslim guerrillas.

Hours after the blockade's tightening Israeli and allied

militia gunners shelled with artillery the outskirts of four villages controlled by Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God) north of the border zone, local security sources said.

The said Hezbollah fighters fired mortar bombs and rockets at two posts of Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) on Friday night at the edge of the 15-km (nine-miles) zone.

Israeli and SLA gunners retaliated with artillery on Iqum Al Toufah, a rugged ridge used by Hezbollah to attack the zone.

No one was hurt in Saturday's shelling or the Friday duels.

In a message to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said his country was "not shelling Lebanon. It is striking Hezbollah positions."

Mr. Rabin said that when Lebanon "prevents Hezbollah and other ... groups from carrying out ... attacks ... there will be no need for further such action on Israel's part."

Hezbollah attacks and Israeli retaliations have escalated in recent weeks. So far this year, the violence has claimed 37 lives and wounded 58 people on the last hot Arab-Israeli war front.

PLO to launch offensive

(Continued from page 1)

Christopher visit.

The Palestinian cabinet was also briefed Saturday on Mr. Arafat's trip to France, United States, Cairo, Tunisia

and Saudi Arabia last week. Dr. Shaath said that Saudi Arabia pledged financial backing for the impoverished Palestinian self-rule and promised to support the PNA's efforts to speed up the peace talks.

Christopher still planning trip

(Continued from page 1)

very good spirit, he is stable, he had a restful night."

The secretary, who last travelled to the region in December, will consult with key regional parties about the current status of Arab-Israeli negotiations and will also hold discussions in the Gulf related to the peace process and to the maintenance of the Iraqi sanctions regime, Ms. Shelly said.

"Recent events have tragically demonstrated that the enemies of peace continue their efforts to keep Arabs and Israelis mired in conflicts of the past," Ms. Shelly said.

It said Syria would never accept anything less than a full Israeli pullback from the Golan and that it would accept nothing that might harm its dignity.

The government daily Syria Times accused Israel of blocking the peace process and said Washington shared responsibility.

"... the USA is not using any pressure to persuade the Israelis to abide by the U.N. resolutions and the U.S. initiative of exchanging land for peace. And this is encouraging Israel to commit more and more crimes as it feels the U.S. green light is still on," Syria Times said.

"As a matter of fact, Israel wouldn't dare to behave in this way had the USA switched on the red light," it said.

"Therefore, the USA must be aware Mr. Christopher's visit in the region won't lead to fruitful and constructive results if it does not switch off the green light," it said.

Rivals gun for Balladur

(Continued from page 1)

diplomatic crisis to bolster Mr. Balladur.

The controversy blew open Wednesday when the respected newspaper Le Monde reported France had accused five Americans — four of them diplomats — of conducting political and economic spying for the CIA. France asked Washington to withdraw them from the country.

On Friday, the U.S. embassy, in a rare display of strong language, said Mr. Pasqua's comment that U.S. officials were to blame for the leaks that led to the report was "neither true nor credible."

Talibans collect weapons

(Continued from page 1)

The Talibans, who have captured nine provincial capitals in just six months, have also demanded that the security of Kabul be placed in their hands, a matter now under negotiation by a U.N.-sponsored group who are also trying to devise an acceptable formula for Mr. Rabbani to transfer power.

Mr. Rabbani, whose two-year term of office expired Dec. 28, 1994, insists that the Talibans be part of the U.N.-mechanism — or interim governing council — which the so-called "religious students" have so far refused.

Charasayb, the former

headquarters of Hezb-e-Islami faction leader Gulbadin Hekmatyar, is now packed with all types of military hardware, tanks, artillery pieces of various calibres and rocket launchers, although not all is in working order.

One of two Russian-made military helicopters, MI-24 Hind attack gunships, was seen just two days ago being flown into the Taliban base from its hiding-place in the nearby mountains.

"The pilot and technicians came up from Kandahar to get this helicopter flying again," said the Taliban in charge.



GROZNY IN RUINS: Weeks of Russian bombardment have destroyed the Chechen capital

Chechen war focal point of Russia's electoral campaign

By Sergei Shargorodsky
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — In Chechnya, they fight with bullets, shells and rockets. In Moscow, the faraway war is reflected in a battle of words as politicians fight for public support and voter sympathy.

The parliamentary hearings on the war, which began Monday, showed that Chechnya is becoming a focal point of Russia's legislative elections campaign.

The Duma, dominated by hardliners, also voted to appoint conservative lawmaker Stanislav Govorukhin to chair the commission.

The government daily Syria Times accused Israel of blocking the peace process and said Washington shared responsibility.

"... the USA is not using any pressure to persuade the Israelis to abide by the U.N. resolutions and the U.S. initiative of exchanging land for peace. And this is encouraging Israel to commit more and more crimes as it feels the U.S. green light is still on," Syria Times said.

"As a matter of fact, Israel wouldn't dare to behave in this way had the USA switched on the red light," it said.

"Therefore, the USA must be aware Mr. Christopher's visit in the region won't lead to fruitful and constructive results if it does not switch off the green light," it said.

were as inherent as those of the parliament itself, written in the constitution that Mr. Yeltsin took such pains to push through in 1993.

Just as parliament was powerless to stop the unpopular war by its repeated appeals, Mr. Goverukhin's group of obscure legislators could at best point accusing fingers.

It was a purely political creation, and its hearings coincided with the unofficial start of electoral campaign: the buzzing behind the scenes, the shifting alliances, the recent creation of several new parties to compete in the December polls.

The hearings, however, did produce some finger pointing at Mr. Yeltsin, his government and reformist liberals.

"The aim of taking (the Chechen capital) Grozny in two days, improving his rating and reestablishing his popular image no doubt pushed the president into this crime," said ex-vice president Alexander Rutskoi, who led armed hardline opposition to Mr. Yeltsin in the fall of 1993.

The testimony of Mr. Rutskoi, who was jailed by Mr. Yeltsin for his role in the bloodshed and is now organizing his own political movement, unveiled some of the hardline rhetoric to be used in the campaign.

The aim is to portray Mr. Yeltsin as a ruthless leader prone to using force to achieve political ends — from sending tanks and troops against his foes in the old, disbanded legislature to sending tanks and

troops into Chechnya. The opposition also is blaming Mr. Yeltsin and reformers for encouraging the separatist regime of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev in their unscrupulous attempts to bring down the former Soviet Union.

Vladimir Kryuchkov, the former head of the Soviet KGB secret service and a mastermind of the failed 1991 communist coup, implied that Mr. Dudayev and those around Mr. Yeltsin at the time had much in common.

"Certain political forces in Moscow liked Dudayev because he was striking at the union's centre, at the

1991 communist and was

against the state emergency committee" that staged the coup, Mr. Kryuchkov said.

The liberals are now finding themselves on the defensive. Long opponents of the war and critics of Mr. Yeltsin, they now seem to have lost the initiative, forced to repeat what sounds like hardline arguments.

The embattled army is

firing back on all fronts,

blaming its failures on political, military and even

military services' leaders.

"As a military man, I believe that the leaders have committed strategic mistakes over Chechnya,"

the chief of the elite airborne troops Col. Gen. Yevgeny Podobozin, said Monday.

"The government is responsible for this operation.

If the state wants to use force, the state has to provide for it."

Operation failure

Somalia venture tarnishes U.N. diplomatic image

By Evelyn Leopold
Reuter

UNITED NATIONS — With considerable anguish, the United Nations withdraws from Somalia shortly, its only peacekeeping venture to end without achieving military or political goals.

"In Somalia, we learned to withdraw — and I do not mean retreat," said Kofi Annan, the mild-mannered Ghanaian U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping.

"We can neither impose nor coerce peace," he told reporters, adding that the withdrawal should serve as a "wake-up call" to clan leaders to stop fighting.

In the wake of the mission, the world body, which entered the tattered east African nation full of good intentions, ended up tarnishing its reputation.

The death of 18 Americans in October 1993 made the United States gun-shy of peacekeeping, provoking the current controversy in the U.S. Congress that seeks, in effect, to take unilateral control of U.N. peacekeeping finances.

The Somalia experience also put an end to aggressive peacekeeping strategies, known as peace enforcement, proposed earlier by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

And the operation showed that few nations, particularly the United States, were ready to sustain casualties — in Somalia or Bosnia — in the name of the United Nations.

The \$5 billion mission is scheduled to close down by March 6 after nearly three years of struggle that resulted in the deaths of 132 servicemen and untold numbers of Somalis.

Mr. Annan noted that the original action began in

1992 when post-cold war ambitions were high. "It was a different time, a different expectations about what the international community could do."

Dr. Ghali, when he took office in early 1992, was aghast at U.N. inaction in a country racked by civil war and famine next door to his native Egypt. But his efforts produced only limited results.

Propelled by outcry over the hundreds of thousands of deaths, then U.S. President George Bush in December 1992 dispatched more than 30,000 troops to distribute food aid.

The Clinton administration, heading Dr. Ghali's pleas that chaos would return if U.S. troops pulled out, embarked on a hybrid operation that saw some American soldiers in the U.N. operation, others outside it.

When 25 Pakistani peacekeepers were killed in June 1993 and 57 wounded, the Security Council authorised the troops to chase the Somali militia loyal to warlord Mohammad Farah Aidid.

Two months later U.S. army rangers came ashore and in October 1993 they were trapped in a battle with Somali militiamen. A total of 18 Americans died, provoking an outcry in Congress and resulting in a March 1994 deadline for U.S. withdrawal.

Other Western nations followed, leaving mainly poorly equipped developing countries to carry on.

U.S. legislators blamed the tragedy on Dr. Ghali, a verdict engendered partly by Clinton administration officials who used the United Nations as a scapegoat for overreaching in Somalia and not doing enough in Bosnia.

The end of offensive U.N. peacekeeping operations for years to come,

particularly proposals for some kind of standing army or rapid deployment force to prevent the often six-month delay before troops are organised and deployed.

The unsuitability of the United Nations for coercive actions among troops from different countries without a unified command. Notable examples were the separate U.S. command, which included the ill-fated rangers, and the independent strategies

of Italian commanders — A bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to cut off nearly all U.S. peacekeeping contributions.

Reports of waste and inefficiency, ending with the theft of \$3.9 million left in an office cabinet, did not help.

A chilling message of U.S. retreat when American lives are at stake in a country not directly threatening the United States. The military junta in Haiti,

for example, immediately took advantage of the announced U.S. withdrawal in Somalia.

Pressed to sum up the venture, Mr. Annan said it was an experiment that saved lives, ended famine — and "did quite a lot of damage to the U.N."

"There is an old proverb," he said. "Travellers, there are no roads — the roads are made by walking."



Peacekeepers leave Somalia.

Talibans collect weapons

(Continued from page 1)

The Talibans, who have captured nine provincial capitals in just six months, have also demanded that the security of Kabul be placed in their hands, a matter now under negotiation by a U.N.-sponsored group who are also trying to devise an acceptable formula for Mr. Rabbani to transfer power.

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"The pilot and technicians came up from Kandahar to get this helicopter flying again," said the Taliban in charge.

**Business
Daily
Sheet**

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Farmers foil 'open markets' experiment

★★ FARMERS' reluctance to sell their fruits and vegetables directly to consumers was behind the unsuccessful attempt to introduce the idea of selling produce on "the open markets" launched at the beginning of this month by the Municipality of Greater Amman in cooperation with the ministries of supply and agriculture. According to Mustafa Abu Isbaa, the manager at the central vegetable market, farmers prefer to dump their produce in the hands of intermediaries and could care less about selling details.

Noting that the farmer himself was the key element to the success of the "open markets" idea, Mr. Abu Isbaa attributed the reluctance of the farmers to come forward and break the ring of intermediaries to their inexperience and their unwillingness to spend time on direct selling. He pointed out that farmers should have been made aware of the new system and encouraged to participate before launching and promoting the project.

Mr. Abu Isbaa emphasised that the intermediary was "the king of the game" as he solely benefits whether produce prices go up or down. The benefits, Mr. Abu Isbaa explains, are extracted from the farmers who do not want to enter into the selling dilemma and from the retailers who try to get the best quality for his customers (Al Ra'i).

★★ A PREPARATORY committee has been set up to arrange for the international economic conference slated for October of this year. The committee is headed by Industry and Trade Minister Ali Abul Ragheb and includes as members the secretaries general of the ministries of finance, information, planning and foreign affairs as well as the deputy governor of the Central Bank, the director-general of the stock exchange, the presidents of the chambers of industry and trade and Dr. Ahmad Mango (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE MINISTRY of Justice intends to propose some amendments on punitive laws regarding bouncing cheques for insufficient funds. A committee is conducting a comprehensive review on the issue with special emphasis on giving judges the authority to substitute a jail term for a fine with the payment of the cheque amount.

Article 421 under consideration for amendment states that anyone giving a cheque without sufficient funds will be penalised by imprisonment and a fine without giving the judge the authority to replace the jail term with a fine after the payment of the cheque amount.

Under the old law of 1960, such an authority was given but it was dropped in the 1988 amendment.

About 350,000 cheques, amounting to approximately JD 300 million, bounced last year. Courts resolved 5,000 lawsuits on this issue and imprisoned 4,000 persons as a result (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE INTENTION is to liquidate the Jordan Company for TV, Radio and Cinema Production due to its administrative and financial troubles (Al Ra'i).

★★ THE GENERAL assembly of the Arab Jordan Investments Company (AJIC) elected Abdul Qader Al Qadi as board chairman and Radi Ibrahim as deputy chairman. Elected as board members were: Hani Al Qadi; Samer Al Qadi; the Arab Jordan Investment Bank's (AJIB); Mahmoud Abdul Rob; Khaled Abu Eiseh; Bashar Al Lawzi; Raed Mohammad Jaber; Fahmi Abu Dayyeh; Hamed Jaber and Company. AJIC was set up last year with an authorised capital of JD 10 million.

German engineers' strike goes into second day

BONN (R) — Germany's first engineering strike for 11 years entered its second day Saturday amid signs that employers were not fully behind their federation's tough line.

I.G. Metall, with three million members the biggest trade union in the Western world, has chosen 20 firms with 11,000 workers in the southern state of Bavaria as the place to start forcing through its demand for a six per cent pay rise.

On Saturday pickets stood at the gates of all the factories, including plants run by engineering giants Siemens A.G. and MAN A.G., to keep up the pressure although no employees would anyway have been due to work at the weekend.

Bavaria is home to many of Germany's best-known engineering sector companies, including carmakers Audi A.G. and BMW A.G., but also has a strong contingent of medium-sized businesses which could suffer most if the strike is prolonged.

With employers still refusing to make any pay offer unless the union accepts compensation in the form of cost cuts, Finance Minister Theo Waigel called on both sides to return to the negotiating table after 34 unsuccessful rounds of bargaining.

"A strike is a burden on the economy, stability and the Deutsche mark and a threat to jobs," he told Sunday's Bild Am Sonntag weekly, according to an advance release.

Even one week of strikes is too much and would hurt our image as a country of political and social stability,

Klaus Breger, chairman of the Christian Democratic Party's small- and medium-sized business lobby, told SAAR Radio:

"I consider it the duty of the employers' federation to put its cards on the table," he said, while adding that firms should be able to do more individual deals with their own workers.

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 25/2/95	New York Close Date 24/2/95
Sterling Pound	1.5950	1.5885
Deutsche Mark	1.4787	1.4610
Swiss Franc	1.2442	1.2453
French Franc	5.1315	5.1485
Japanese Yen	96.77	96.85
European Currency Unit	1.2770	1.2750

USD Per STD. Euro opening = 1819.0000 or equivalent

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 25/2/1995

Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.00	6.22	6.56
Sterling Pound	6.31	6.50	6.87	7.31
Deutsche Mark	4.81	4.87	5.06	5.56
Swiss Franc	3.37	3.56	3.67	4.31
French Franc	5.37	5.75	6.12	6.62
Japanese Yen	2.00	2.06	2.12	2.25
European Currency Unit	5.91	6.06	6.34	6.58

Interest bid rate for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Practices Metals Date: 24/2/1995

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	376.65	7.50	Silver	4.64	0.111

In Jordan

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 25/2/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6940	0.6960
Sterling Pound	1.1013	1.1028
Deutsche Mark	0.4742	0.4766
Swiss Franc	0.5573	0.5601
French Franc	0.1347	0.1354
Japanese Yen	0.7151	0.7165
Dutch Guilder	0.4231	0.4252
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0421	0.0426
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Per 100

Other Currencies Dates: 25/2/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahrain Dinar	1.5280	1.4450
Lebanese Lira	0.042085	0.042375
Saudi Riyal	0.18478	0.18587
Kuwait Dinar	2.3150	2.3500
Qatari Riyal	0.1695	0.1920
Egyptian Pound	0.1900	0.2100
Cyprus Riyal	1.7940	1.8110
UAE Dirham	0.1885	0.1901
Greek Drachma	0.2775	0.3125
Cypriot Pound	1.42025	1.51050

Per 100

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Industrialists urge Group of Seven to set up information highway rules

BRUSSELS (R) — World business leaders on Saturday called on the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations to create global rules to guarantee competition and guard against piracy on the information superhighway.

"It is time for governments to take action to set clear rules on a global scale and create a favourable environment for a new wave of investment by the private sector," said Carlo de Benedetti, the Italian computer maker.

Mr. De Benedetti, as chairman of the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT), proposed that businessmen from Europe, the U.S., Canada and Japan

be given to dismantling trade barriers, agreeing on technical standards to make sure global networks are compatible, and determining what services people really want.

"We urge that a clear action plan be put on the agenda for the next G-7 summit in Halifax," he said, referring to a full summit in the Canadian city.

Two forces were driving the information revolution, Mr. De Benedetti said — technological developments that make it easier to transfer large amounts of data and the emergence of an interconnected global economy, which is making national borders irrelevant.

"These two forces will

shape the world economy and will lead us into a major development cycle that has no precedent in history," he said.

Government ministers from the United States, Canada, France, Britain, Japan, Germany and Italy were meeting with business leaders to discuss what needs to be done to create a global information society.

Several corporate executives said changes to industry and society at large as a result of the new technologies would have consequences far greater than those following the industrial revolution.

Educators and researchers attending the round table discussion pointed out that there would be vast changes in the way people learn as more and more information is made available on public networks.

"Most people think this is about 500 television channels, but it's not," said Michael Dertouzos, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "This is about books, about managing money, health, recipes, it's about learning, human speech and a lot more."

Michael Spindler, chief executive of Apple Computers, echoed the common theme expressed during the three-day conference by business leaders from around the world.

"Technology is no longer a hindrance. The barriers are political," he said.

Reflecting the concerns of many of the world's publishers about misuse of their products on global computer networks, Mark Woessner, chairman of Bertelsmann AG, called for new, global copyright laws.

"This is only possible by creating a new copyright management system," he said.

U.S. Vice President Al Gore told industrialised nations Saturday the United States would open its telecommunications markets to anyone who did likewise as a way of boosting the information society of the future.

At a speech at a G-7 confer-

ence on ways to exploit new technologies, Mr. Gore said Robust competition was essential for countries to achieve their goals.

"Whether by new law or new regulation, we intend to open foreign investment in telecommunications services in the United States for companies of all countries who have opened their own markets," he told a lunch of G-7 ministers and European Union dignitaries.

The (G-7) — the United States, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Britain and Canada — is meeting in Brussels for weekend discussions on ways to boost the information society, a world where computers, telephones and televisions converge in a vast global link-up.

"Empowered by the move-

able type of the next millennium we can send caravans loaded with the wealth of human knowledge and creativity along trails of light to every home and village," Mr. Gore said.

The meeting is surrounded by a dazzling array of high-tech wizardry at a trade fair featuring everything from a machine that reads palms to computers that track the destruction of the rain forest.

The best way to drive this revolution forward is for govern-

ments to understand that the customer's choice is the major driver," Peter Bonfield, chairman of Britain's computer manufacturer ICI told the group.

Mr. Gore, a long-time advocate of high technology, told the G-7 ministers that as well as opening markets they needed to develop effective property rights guarantees for traffic travelling on the information superhighway, and that common standards needed to be set for the technology.

G-7 partners disagree on some aspects of the way for-

ward, particularly how to protect national cultures from drowning in American products.

Samir Baidas: Marriott's sales manager

Samir Baidas has assumed his duties as a sales manager of the Amman Marriott Hotel effective March 15, 1995.

Mr. Baidas studied hotel management at the HotelConseil University in Switzerland. After graduation, he worked at the Sheraton in London for two years. In 1991, he joined the Radisson Hotel in Saudi Arabia until his transfer to the Amman Marriott Hotel.

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Cantona banned for 7 months

ST ALBANS, England (R) — Fiery French striker Eric Cantona was on Friday banned from playing soccer for seven months and fined 10,000 sterling (\$15,900) by the English Football Association for his two-footed attack on a spectator.

A three-man disciplinary committee suspended the Manchester United player "from all football activities" until September 30 after finding him guilty of bringing the game into disrepute.

Cantona told the committee he was deeply sorry for last month's attack on a Crystal Palace fan that was seen by millions on television.

He sat stony-faced with his arms folded and said nothing after the verdict was announced at a news conference. Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson was equally reticent but the club's lawyer said he thought the ban was a "bit harsh".

The ban goes beyond the measures taken by Manchester United who told the former French captain in January he could not play for the club again this season. The Premier League champions also fined him two weeks' wages — 20,000 pounds (\$31,800).

The F.A. fine was the equivalent of a week's wages for Cantona, whose career has been bedeviled by clashes with authority.

"I don't think he got off lightly. His particular sin was going into the spectator's area," F.A. chief executive Graham Kelly said afterwards.

Cantona jumped into the crowd with both feet flying after a spectator ran down to the touchline to abuse him when he was sent off for a foul. English soccer has been tarnished by crowd violence, allegations of bribery and drug problems this season.

Police on Tuesday charged the former French captain with common assault. He is to appear in court on March 23.

The Football Association, announcing its ban, said it had taken account of a number of factors — Cantona's previous record, the provocation he faced the fan, his expression of regret and assurances of good behaviour in future.

"We are concerned about the increasing level of abuse that footballers seem to have to suffer — we don't think it is acceptable, we don't think it is part of the game," Kelly said.

He considered Cantona's apology sincere. "He has come

along today and has said there will be no repetition of this sort of incident. I think he recognises the gravity (of it)."

Cantona's French lawyer, Jean-Jacques Bertrand, had said he feared the star could receive a permanent worldwide ban. Neither the club nor Cantona will appeal but United, champions for the past two years, were upset by the decision.

"I think it is a bit harsh," Manchester United lawyer Maurice Watkins said. He said Cantona would continue to be paid by the club but would not receive any bonuses.

"He expressed his regret deeply and sincerely," Watkins said of the disciplinary hearing.

This is the second major English soccer inquiry in two days. On Thursday the Premier League found sacked Arsenal manager George Graham received a "bung" (payment) of 425,500 pounds (\$677,300) from an agent as a result of his purchase of two Scandinavian players.

It stopped short of saying Graham had broken any regulations or of announcing any sanctions on the manager, sacked by Arsenal on Tuesday after they were informed of its findings.

In Paris, French league president Noel Le Graet said Cantona's sanction was severe.

"I thought the English Association would be content with the decision already taken by Manchester United to suspend him for the remainder of the season," he said.

"The new sanction is tough because it will prevent him from starting the next season," he said.

Cantona, who was stripped of the French captaincy, will miss four of France's qualifying matches for the 1996 European Championships while serving his ban.

Le Graet added: "I've already said that Cantona could not be France's captain any more and that still stands, even if his behaviour in the team has always been exemplary."

Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards said the club was disappointed by the F.A.'s decision to extend the club's own ban.

"We felt a ban until the end of the season and a maximum fine was the right punishment, but obviously the F.A. have decided to add to that. We could appeal, but we won't," he said.

"I cannot say more than we are disappointed with it, but we accept their decision."

Hull from '92 champs bows in defeat

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — A yachting era ended here Friday off Point Loma.

Dennis Conner's Stars and Stripes won the last race in the third round of America's defender trials by one-minute and 52 seconds over the all-women crew aboard America3.

Challenger races were concluded earlier. Fourth-round action for U.S. defender hopefuls and international challengers begins in March.

The race was the last for the America's USA-23 hull, which will be replaced by the new USA-43 for the fourth round-robin starting March 2. USA-23 was the hull that carried the America3 crew to victory in the 1992 America's Cup.

The long-and-narrow design parameters of USA-23 also became the guide that many naval architects followed for the 1995 event.

"It's kind of sad to put her

to bed," America3 president Bill Koch said of USA-23. "A lot of people don't realize how significant USA-23 was."

"At the time it was built, everyone was going for stability and wide boats. We went long and narrow. Now everyone is going long and narrow. USA-23 changed the game. Being copied is great flat-

tery."

Three years after its day, America3 was competitive in some conditions, particularly going into the winds in more than 10 knots. But the new generation boats had surpassed USA-23's downwind abilities.

The defender's third round-robin ended with Young America and Stars and Stripes tied for the lead with 25 points. Winners in

the new boat."

"Most people don't realize how significant some of USA-23's innovations were," said Koch.

When USA-23 was launched in 1992, Paul Cayard, then skipper of challenger II Moro Di Venezia, remarked: "If USA-23 is right, then everyone else is wrong."

"Everyone else was wrong," laughed Doug Peterson.

Japan bids for 2002 World Cup

TOKYO (R) — Japan is to confirm on Monday it is formally joining arch-rivals South Korea in the race to stage the 2002 World Cup final.

Mexico has also lodged a bid but a FIFA spokesman said the country had not yet formally confirmed it, but could do so by mail or fax before next Tuesday's deadline.

Japan's bid committee said Shunichiro Okano, vice-president of the Football Association of Japan, and Junji Ogura, the committee's secretary-general, would hand over the written confirmation of the bid and a letter from Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter.

It said the letter of official

ly declaring intention to host the finals, written by Ken Nagamuna, president of the

Football Association of

Japan, was submitted to

FIFA through fax on Friday.



Orlando Magic guard Nick Anderson #25 sprints a basketball over an opponent (AP photo)

Shaq ejected but Orlando gets revenge

ORLANDO (R) — The angry giant was banished, but his teammates stepped up big.

Orlando centre Shaquille O'Neal was thrown out of the game in the first quarter, but the Magic elevated their game to trounce the Celtics 129-103 on Friday and avenge a defeat by Boston the night before.

O'Neal, the league's leading scorer, was ejected with 4:35 left in the first quarter after he threw a punch or hard shot at Boston centre Eric Montross, who had slowed him down just enough in the second half the night before for the Celtics to beat Orlando.

Nick Anderson and Anfernee Hardaway scored 27 points apiece for the Magic,

who lost to Boston 119-117 Thursday.

Orlando guard Brian Shaw and forward Horace Grant both missed the game due to back spasms.

"Every disappointing," Boston coach Chris Ford said. "They were down two players and then Shaq gets tossed out. Instead of taking advantage of all those opportunities, we just caved in. They stepped it up, they got mad, they got aggressive, they took it to us and beat us in every fashion possible."

In Phoenix, Charles Barkley scored 25 points and Wayman Tisdale added 18 off the bench as the Suns routed the Los Angeles Clippers 118-106.

The Suns, who were coming off their first consecutive

losses of the season, improved to 23-5 at home and kept pace with Orlando for the league's best record at 41-13.

At Los Angeles, Elden Campbell hit a 10-foot baseline jumper with 2.5 seconds left in overtime to lift the Lakers to a 95-93 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Anthony Peeler had a career-high six 3-pointers en route to 27 points and Vlade Divac scored 25 points and matched his career high with 24 rebounds.

Campbell had 18 points and 16 rebounds for the Lakers, who had won eight of their last nine games, including four straight and five in a row at home.

At New Jersey, Derrick Coleman had 23 points and Chris Morris 20 as the Nets beat the slumping Dallas Mavericks 114-104.

Dallas' Jimmy Jackson, the league's fifth leading scorer, left the game after injuring his left ankle midway through the first quarter.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 12 of his 37 points in a fourth-quarter run as the Spurs pulled away for their fourth straight win, 114-97 over the Detroit Pistons.

In Miami, Glen Rice scored 24 points and Billy Owens had 21 points and 10 rebounds as the heat defeated the Chicago Bulls 91-83.

Scottie Pippen scored 22 points to lead Chicago.

In Portland, Rod Strickland scored 30 points as the Trail Blazers cruised to a 114-101 victory over the Utah Jazz.

Karl Malone scored 26 points for Utah, which has lost five of its last six road games after a 15-game road win streak.

In Milwaukee, Dale Davis scored 21 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to lead the Indiana Pacers to their fifth straight win, 98-86 over the Bucks.

In Baltimore, Steve Smith scored 27 points and Mookie Blaylock added 25 as the Atlanta Hawks handed the Washington Bullets their sixth straight loss, 107-92.

The Hawks won for the sixth time in their last eight games. The Bullets have lost 12 of their last 13.

In Seattle, Shawn Kemp scored nine of his 13 points in the fourth quarter, including a pair of free throws with 1:28 left to break a tie, as the Supersonics beat the Denver Nuggets 90-86.

The loss broke a three-game winning streak for Denver.

Saying that like most battered spouses he wanted love and approval, Longinus describes his volatile relationship with a man he calls Tom.

He details a 1982 incident when his lover went into a tirade, came at him with a knife and then raped him.

In a People Magazine excerpt of Longinus' book, "Breaking the Surface," the diver also describes painful memories of his adoptive father who, he says, only took an interest in him when he was diving.

Longinus recalls one occasion when his adoptive father beat him with a belt until he successfully finished a new dive he was practising.

"He hit me across my backside and legs until it burned. That I can't forget," Longinus said.

Detailing the sexual abuse he encountered with his gay lover, the diver said it took place in 1983, and was "over the fact that he wasn't the only man I'd been sexually involved with during that time."

Louganis to meet public

NEW YORK (Agencies)

— The taped interview in which Greg Louganis admitted he has AIDS and was HIV-positive at the 1988 Olympics was shown Friday, even as the diver prepared for his first public appearance since the disclosure.

The conversation between Louganis and Barbara Walters was broadcast on the television show "20/20," but excerpts and transcripts released by the ABC network had already revealed the story.

Louganis, who admitted his homosexuality last year, plans to appear here Monday at a Different Light bookstore to sign copies of his autobiography, "Breaking the Surface."

An excerpt of the book, published by People magazine, said Louganis was driven to excel by "a lifetime of fear and pain."

Louganis, 35, said after striking his head on the diving board in Seoul he was "paralyzed with fear" that his blood might infect other divers or the doctors who treated his injury.

The doctor has since tested negative for AIDS and medical experts said there was no danger of contamination from blood in the diving pool.

"AIDS risk from Louganis 'infinitesimal'"

In Lausanne, Switzerland, the Chairman of the IOC medical commission, Prince Alexandre de Merode, said Friday the risk of Greg Louganis infecting other divers at the 1992 Seoul Olympics had been "infinitesimal."

The American diver, who had not told officials he was HIV positive, hit his head on the edge of a springboard and blood dripped into the pool.

The athlete, who only revealed he had AIDS last week, was at the time worried about the safety of other athletes.

But Merode said there had been no danger to others as the virus could only be spread by "direct contact of body fluids."

Merode added there was no reason to demand from athletes a declaration of whether they were HIV positive or not before competing.

Louganis says he was raped.

In New York, diver Greg Louganis, the U.S. Olympic gold medal winner who said earlier this week he has AIDS, tells in a recent article of a six-year homosexual relationship with an abusive lover who raped him.

Saying that like most battered spouses he wanted love and approval, Longinus describes his volatile relationship with a man he calls Tom.

He details a 1982 incident when his lover went into a tirade, came at him with a knife and then raped him.

Longinus recalls one occasion when his adoptive father beat him with a belt until he successfully finished a new dive he was practising.

"He hit me across my backside and legs until it burned. That I can't forget," Longinus said.

Detailing the sexual abuse he encountered with his gay lover, the diver said it took place in 1983, and was "over the fact that he wasn't the only man I'd been sexually involved with during that time."

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Holyfield medical suspension lifted

LAS VEGAS (R) — Former world heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield received a split decision on Friday in his battle to end his medical suspension and fight again.

The Nevada State Athletic Commission, which regulates boxing in the state, lifted its medical suspension of Holyfield, clearing the way for other states to allow him to fight again, but it did not rule on whether he could fight in Nevada.

The commission issued its medical suspension when Holyfield was hospitalised immediately after he lost by decision to Michael Moorer here last April 22. Holyfield retired four days later after he was diagnosed as suffering from a heart condition — a stiff left ventricle.

The commission did not have the opportunity at its monthly meeting to grant or deny the 32-year-old Holyfield a licence to fight in Nevada because his request for a licence was withdrawn in a letter from his attorney.

The medical suspension by the commission, one of the most influential boxing reg-

ulatory bodies in the world, had effectively prevented Holyfield from being licensed throughout the United States.

Holyfield's promoter, Main Events Inc, plans for the former champion to fight Ray Mercer on May 20 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Dr. Elias Ghanem, one of the five commissioners, on Friday reiterated that he is not satisfied with medical data supplied to the medical advisory board by Holyfield's physician.

"I have some unanswered questions about Evander's medical condition," said Ghanem, the only commission member who is a physician.

The commission's vote to lift the medical suspension on Holyfield was 4-1 with Ghanem dissenting.

A five-member medical board that advises the commission voted unanimously earlier this year to reinstate Holyfield.

Holyfield can reapply for a licence to fight in Nevada by requesting that the matter appear on the regulatory

body's monthly agenda. But commission chairman James Nava said he will not consider placing such a request on the agenda until the body "receives more information and also the opportunity to speak with Dr. Ron Stevens," Stevens is Holyfield's physician.

According to Ghanem, Stevens told him in a recent telephone conversation that he could not discuss Holyfield's medical condition, at the fighter's request.

Holyfield, with a record of 30-2, was world heavyweight champion from 1990 to 1992, when he lost to Riddick Bowe.

Then in 1993 Holyfield beat Bowe to capture the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation versions of the heavyweight title.

Bowe had relinquished the World Boxing Council portion to Lennox Lewis of Britain, who lost it to current champion Oliver McCall. Moorer lost the WBA and IBF portions to current champ George Foreman.

Baseball talks to resume Monday

SCOTTSDALE (AP) — Negotiations between striking major league baseball players and team owners will resume here Monday, two days before the scheduled start of exhibition games.

Those pre-season training contests are the centre of the latest furor between the union and management. The union has declared anyone taking part in such games will be considered a strike-breaker.

About two-thirds of minor leaguers, including former basketball star Michael Jordan, are expected to honour the picket line and refuse to play. The rest are about to be placed in the centre of the controversy.

"Spring training games will be scab games because playing those games will require clubs to replace the major leaguers who typically play them," union leader Don Fehr said in a memo.

Clubs have threatened to send home any players unwilling to take part in the games, with the New York Yankees already ditching minor leaguers Mike DeJean, Mark Carper and Bubba Carpenter

Chang, Agassi in U.S. indoor semis

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Defending champion Michael Chang beat Jonathan Stark 6-7 (7-5), 6-1, 7-6 (7-4) on Friday in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Indoor.

Chang will face Paul Haarhuis in a rematch of the 1994 final. Haarhuis followed his upset of top-ranked Pete Sampras with an easy 6-2, 6-3 victory New Zealander Brett Steven.

The other semifinal pits No. 2 Andre Agassi, who brushed off qualifier Sébastien Lareau 7-5, 6-2, against 20-year-old Thomas Enqvist of Sweden, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over Richey Rennerberg.

Holyfield, with a record of 30-2, was world heavyweight champion from 1990 to 1992, when he lost to Riddick Bowe.

"I just try not to let that little yellow ball bounce twice. You never know when you'll be able to run down a shot," said Chang, a loser to Stark just last week in Memphis.

Trailing 5-2 in the third set, Chang won 12 of the next 14 points to tie. In the tiebreaker, match point was vintage Chang — a running, reaching backhand that passed Stark at the net.

"If he can get a racket on it, he can win the point," Stark said.

Chang, seeded third and ranked No. 6, lost first-set tiebreaker after fighting off four set points. Chang sprinted between the sidelines chasing down overheads and drops. He broke stark three times in the second set.

Following his match with Chang, Haarhuis plays a doubles semifinal.

"You get tired sometimes, and it's always tough to come back early the next day. But today, I started off on the right note, got a break and never looked back," Haarhuis said after his 62-minute win.

Serving at 15-40, Steven couldn't handle Haarhuis' high-hopping return, hitting a backhand into the net to give the lanky Dutchman the match and a fourth service break. Haarhuis lost just 13 points on his serve and didn't allow a break.

Agassi has won all 15 of his matches this year while losing only two sets, and has won 37 of his last 39. But he wasn't sharp against Lareau, the 114th-ranked Canadian who has won 14 matches in his career.

"I felt very sluggish. The ball looked like a BB. I think I'm lucky I didn't lose that set," Agassi said. "Hopefully, tomorrow I can come out a little more up against en-

quist."

Agassi lost to Enqvist in the 1993 U.S. Open.

Enqvist dropped serve four times to the 43rd-ranked Enqvist, but he fought off two match points with sharp



Michael Chang

returns. He scooped a forehand over the baseline on the third match point.

Enqvist, a former No. 1 doubles player and a net specialist, was kept rooted in the backcourt by the big Swede's 161 kph second serve and deep, consistent groundstrokes.

The \$714,250 tournament is sponsored by Comcast.

Becker, Stich in EuroCard semis

One loss to Yevgeny Kafelnikov was enough to teach Boris Becker a lesson.

Reneberg dropped serve four times to the 43rd-ranked Enqvist, but he fought off two match points with sharp

saving a match point.

That was Becker's only loss in three weeks on the European Indoor circuit, after his first-round exit at the Australian Open in January. The German began the indoor series by winning in Marseille, France. He is now 12-1 indoors this year.

"I learned my lesson from Milan. I was trying not to come in all the time. I was mixing up my serve more. I came in very determined," Becker said.

His victory in Milan brought Kafelnikov to a career-high No. 8 in world rankings and he will become

No. 7 next week despite his loss Friday.

Kafelnikov has been weakened by a cold since he arrived here and battled fever and dizzy spells during his first two matches. He required treatment for a bleeding nose in the 11th game of his match against Becker.

"In the morning I feel better, the cold is going away, but my body is tired. Every time my body is tired, my nose starts bleeding," Kafelnikov said.

After winning the first-set tiebreak, Becker, the No. 3 in the world, broke for a 2-0 lead in the second set. But he immediately dropped his own serve and allowed Kafelnikov to stay in the match.

In the 12th game, Kafelnikov survived two match points. On the first, Becker's forehand passing shot long, on the second Kafelnikov produced a service winner after having set up Becker's match point with a double fault.

Becker rolled through the tiebreak and finished off the match after one hour, 45 minutes with his 16th ace.

"I feel I'm able to hit the important shots when it matters. I'm moving faster than in many years. I hope it's going to be a very exciting 1995," he said.

Kafelnikov said he was under pressure the entire match.

"He was more focused than me, he really wanted to beat me, especially here in Germany," Kafelnikov said. "He was better today."

Krajicek overwhelmed Larsson with 29 aces to reach his second semifinal of the year. He will now meet Damman.

The hard-hitting Dutchman cruised through the first set after breaking for a 4-2 lead.

That was the only break of the match, which lasted one hour and 54 minutes.

Krajicek wasted two match points in the second-set tiebreak and one more in the decisive tiebreak. But he converted the next with a service winner.

"I am now quite satisfied with my game. After my shoulder injury I am now able to serve 100 per cent," Krajicek said.

Larsson missed the chance of becoming the highest-ranked Swede on the IBM/ATP Tour. Stefan Edberg is No. 14, and Larsson, who is now No. 15, would have climbed to No. 12 had he won Friday.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♦AQJ9 ♣AK ♦A8 ♣A10
What is your opening bid?

A.—You have a five-low hand, with no high cards, so the hand is not strong enough for a demand bid in spades. However, since your hand is balanced, there's no reason not to open two no trump — five-card major doesn't bar you from making the most descriptive bid.

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K9 ♠AQ10 ♣92 ♣A952

The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 : Pass 1 : ? :

What action do you take?
A.—It is simply a matter of competing now or hoping you can act later. We think it is safer to get into the bidding before the opponents know exactly how strong they are, so we would make a takeout double despite the risk that we might get caught between two strong hands.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♦A3 ♠542 ♣654 ♣AKQ52

Partner opens the bidding with a no trump. What do you bid now?

A.—If you play the modern range of 21-22, make the value bid of six no trump. If your range is the old-fashioned 22-24, you should invite a grand slam by raising to five no trump. That's forcing to slam and asks partner to bid a grand slam with a maximum.

U.S. TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE

A taxpayer service specialist from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service will be at the American Embassy in Amman from March 6 to March 9 to assist U.S. taxpayers.

Two special tax seminars will be conducted on Monday March 6 and Tuesday March 7 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the United States Information Service auditorium at the Embassy. All U.S. citizens, residents or non-residents, with general tax questions (i.e. How to file? What to file?) will be welcome to attend one of those seminars. No reservation is necessary.

Individual assistance will be provided by appointment on March 6 to 9. Each taxpayer is advised to have a copy of his or her last filed return and to have all papers well organised to the extent possible when appearing for an appointment. The IRS representative will assist by answering questions but will not fill your tax return forms. Appointments may be made by calling 820-101, extension 2062.

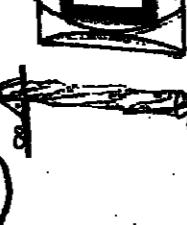
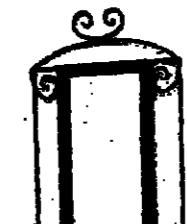
Income tax forms and information booklets are now available in the consular section of the embassy.

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ADPRO

Novotna advances in Linz

LINZ, Austria (AP) — Top seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic and three unseeded players Friday advanced to the semi-final in the \$161,000 WTA indoor tennis tournament. Novotna defeated Austrian Petra Schwarz-Ritter 6-1, 6-2. In the semi-final she faces Meike Babel of Germany who swiftly ousted sixth seed Sandra Cecchini of Italy.

Russian nuclear minister scoffs at American threat

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's top nuclear official sounds unimpressed by Newt Gingrich's threat to cut off U.S. aid if Russia presses ahead with developing Iran's atomic-power programme.

"I'm not worried," said Viktor N. Mikhailov, minister for nuclear power. "... What's \$215 million for Russia?"

He was referring to a key U.S. aid programme for dismantling and securing Russian nuclear weapons material.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Mikhailov reported that 200 Russian nuclear specialists are already in Iran working on its first power reactor, and acknowledged that the Moscow-Tehran agreement does not spell out how to deal with Iran's spent nuclear fuel, potential source of weapons material.

Mr. Mikhailov signed a contract last month in Tehran under which his ministry will complete installation of a power reactor at Bushehr, in southern Iran, whose construction was suspended in the late 1970s. A second contract, for completing a second Bushehr unit, is ready for signing, he said.

In addition, a side "working protocol" may lead to two more power units at Bushehr,

a university research reactor, training in Russia for Iranian specialists, and other future facilities "that I cannot discuss now," Mr. Mikhailov said.

Russia and Iran say the nuclear complex will be used only for peaceful purposes.

But the U.S. administration contends the Iranians have

plans to develop nuclear weapons, and has pressured

Russia since 1992 to forgo cooperation with Tehran.

In the latest U.S. warning, House Speaker Gingrich said last week that "we should cut off all aid to Russia" if it persists in developing Iran's programme.

Mr. Mikhailov, whose

ministry produces Russian nuclear weapons, told the AP that he appreciates U.S. aid, particularly \$215 million for securing the plutonium and other material from weapons dismantled under U.S.-Russian arms-control accords.

But Russia has lost even more money because of a U.S.-Russia agreement against "dumping" his ministry's cheap uranium on the American market, he said in the interview Friday.

"It is more important to me to have free trade," he said. "I would have earned \$450 million over three years (on uranium). I don't want to put my hand in the American taxpayer's pocket. We want to earn our money."

The ministry earns \$1.2 billion a year by exporting products, he said. "What is \$215 million for Russia?"

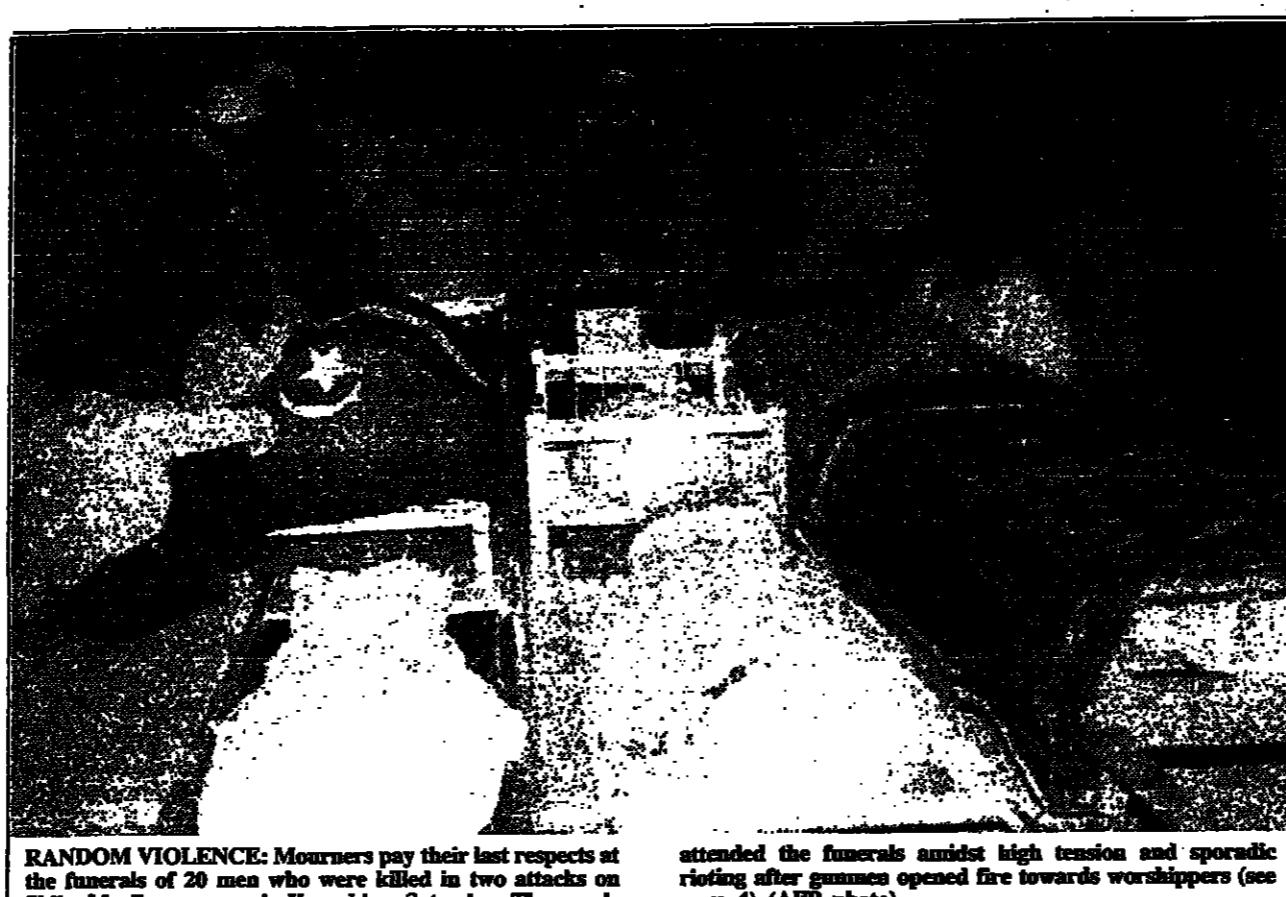
At one point, the Russian cabinet member was dismissive of U.S. threats, saying, "The Americans will never break these (aid) agreements, because they are profitable to them" — that is, to U.S. companies participating in the weapons security programme.

At another point, his voice rising, he suggested he himself might break the agreements. If Washington's pressure continues, he is "prepared to close down" the U.S.-Russia discussions on joint oversight of dismantled weapons material, he said.

Russia and Iran say the nuclear complex will be used only for peaceful purposes.

But the U.S. administration contends the Iranians have

plans to develop nuclear weapons, and has pressured



RANDOM VIOLENCE: Mourners pay their last respects at the funerals of 20 men who were killed in two attacks on Shiite Muslim mosques in Karachi on Saturday. Thousands

GIA behind jail riot — paper

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most feared of Algeria's militant factions, was the organiser of an Algiers prison mutiny in which 100 people were killed, an Algerian newspaper said on Saturday.

A warden recruited at Sekadijk high-security jail by the GIA had smuggled in four pistols and six grenades used in the mutiny which was crushed on Wednesday, the daily Al Watan said.

"I expect that we will have (Oman's) support," she said. "I was pleased to find that His Majesty's views on the question of maintaining sanctions coincided with our own," she said. "I also informed His Majesty of the readiness of the United States government to explore means of helping to relieve, within the sanctions framework, the pressing humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people."

Algerian authorities said 100 people, 96 of them prisoners, died during the mutiny which lasted more than 24 hours.

The militant Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) accused the authorities of killing 200 detainees in a deliberate massacre.

Diplomats say there is growing concern in some Gulf Arab states about the effects of sanctions on Iraqi civilians.

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